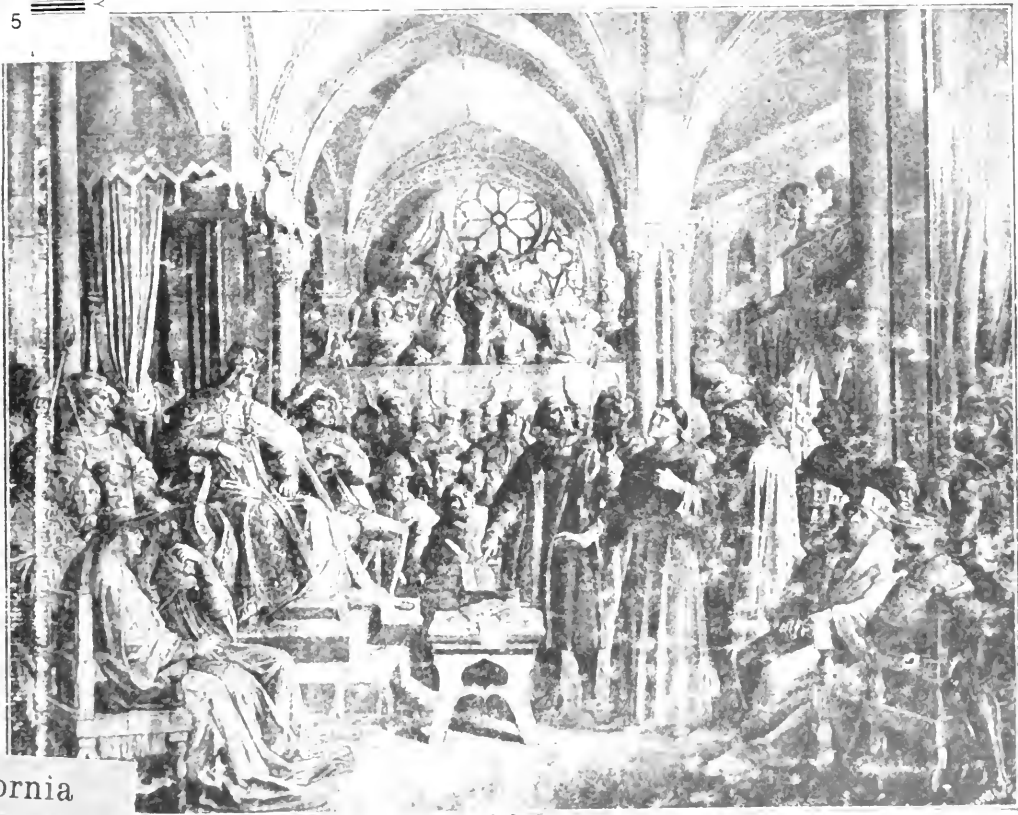


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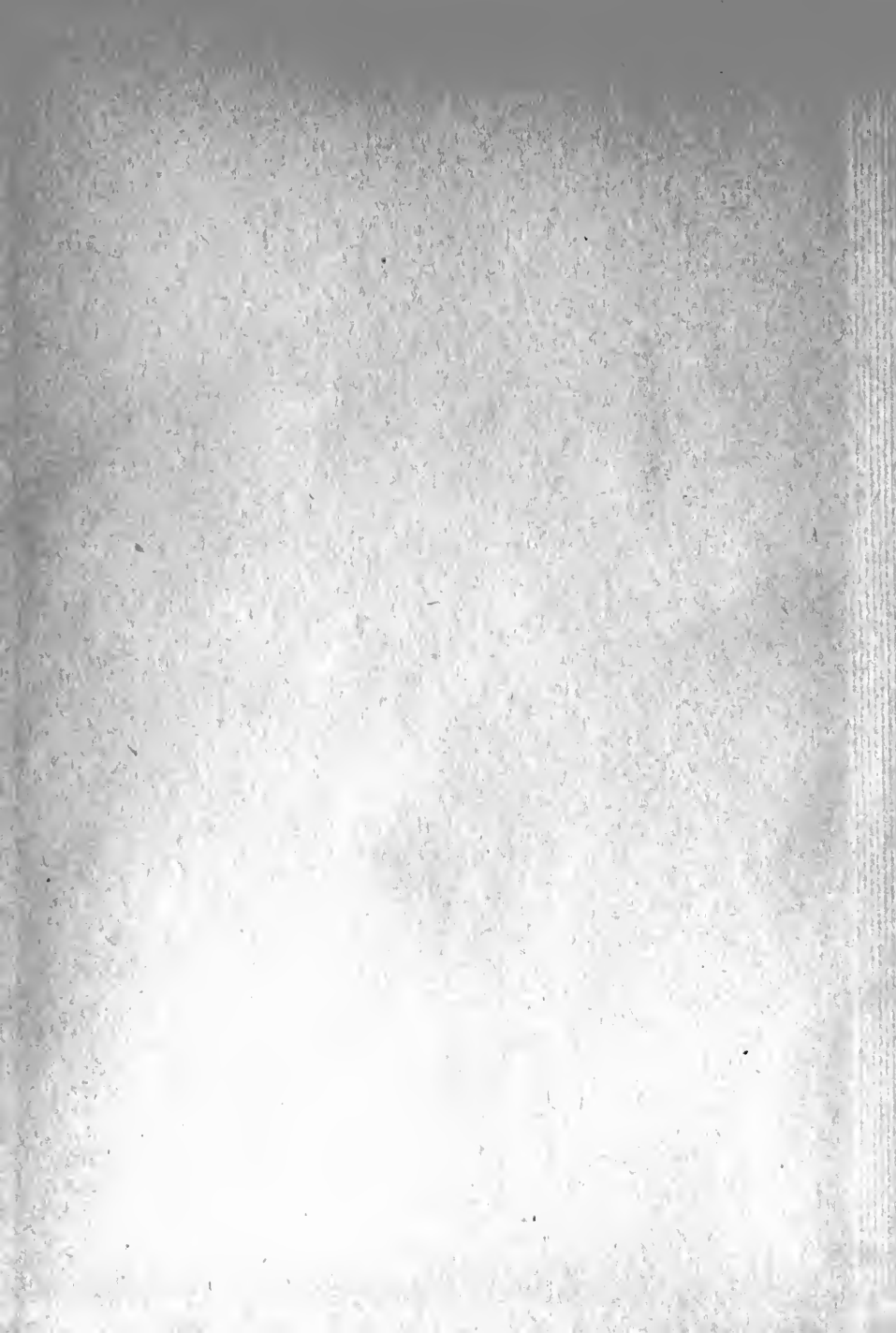
HERE I STAND!"



NARRATIVES AND SKETCHES FROM REFORMATION DAYS

By TH. GRAEBNER.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN by JOHN GRAEBNER.





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Profusely illustrated.



ERNST KAUFMANN

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1. "The First Lutheran."

(Hartmut von Kronberg)



“**L**E was”, says Ranke, “in a certain sense, the first pious, fully convinced Lutheran”. A man whom such a great historian called “the first Lutheran” is surely worthy to be kept in honored memory and to be spoken of especially at this time, the four hundredth anniversary of the Reformation being close at hand. His entire life, from the time when he became associated with Luther, can be summed up in the words of the great Reformer, entitling this little book, “Here I Stand!” With self-sacrificing courage he boldly devoted his life to the Gospel’s cause. He was one of the pioneers of the Reformation. Though he did not suffer a martyr’s death, his life was that of a martyr to the Lutheran faith.

Hartmut von Kronberg was born in 1488. The Kronbergers were quite well to do and played an important part among the German knighthood. Hartmut had early taken his stand with Luther. He actively participated in the Diet at Worms, and after he had unsuccessfully spoken to the Emperor in Luther’s behalf, he undertook to wield the pen in place of the accustomed sword, and published a number of writings in which he very openly endorsed Luther’s doctrine. These treatises were written in a sharp tone. It was especially by the bold language which Hartmut used, that he incurred the enmity of Luther’s opponents.

Hartmut was an associate of Franz von Sickingen, whom, together with another fearless knight, Ulrich von Hutten, he had won for Luther’s side. But when the feud between Sickingen and the Archbishop of Treves had ended unfavorably for the promoters of the Reformation, Hartmut, like his friends, retreated to a place of safety. The Archbishop of Treves, the Landgrave of Hesse, and the Elector of the Palatinate, made a united effort to inflict swift punishment and bring destruction upon all the adherents of Sickingen, and the first to fall a victim to this unholy alliance was Hartmut von Kronberg. Hartmut was not prepared for any defense, and after he had very bravely held the fortress for several days, he was finally compelled to withdraw; through a secret tunnel he escaped. He had saved his life, but that was all. The city and the fortress fell into the hands of the enemy, and the entire Kronberg estate was assigned to Landgrave Philip as spoil of war.

Hartmut, now an exile from home, did not despair in his sad condition. He trusted in God, and having a firm faith, which he expressed in a large number of writings that issued from his pen during his exile, he took comfort and good courage from that Book,

which was the sole foundation of his faith and life, the Holy Bible. The divine word of Scripture was so unmistakably clear and so convincingly sure to him, that it supplied him with all the instruction and the courage that he needed for the defense of the truth and the fight against error, as we see chiefly from his writings of the year 1521 and 1522. These writings exerted a mighty influence chiefly upon the city of Strasburg. Next to Luther's books, those of the knight of Kronberg were then most widely read at Strasburg and elsewhere in Germany; they were hungrily devoured by the people throughout the land. These writings were a message of



Franz von Sickingen.

light and deliverance, and what appealed in particular to the common people in Hartmut's writings was the simplicity and even crudeness of his language. Himself not a scholar, he wrote in the language of the untutored masses, and his words touched their hearts.

We find throughout the writings of the noble knight of Kronberg expressions of faith in God and of firm trust in His goodness and mercy. The vanity of all earthly goods compared with the heavenly treasures, which are much more precious, and never fade away, and which all who believe in God, trusting in His mercy in Christ, hold as a sure possession, even though they daily sin much—the substance of Luther's preaching, that is what Hartmut again

and again repeats. Whatever is against Luther, says Hartmut, is of the devil, but we must deal mercifully and not revengefully with the enemy in his stubborn blindness. From faith alone can flow love toward our neighbor. That is why Luther's doctrine of faith is the only means whereby the church can be reformed and all the ills of this world healed. That was in short the creed of Hartmut von Kronberg.

In one of his writings he says, Luther's doctrine is truly the doctrine of Christ. "He that follows this doctrine, follows not Luther, but Christ. We do not believe Doctor Luther any further



Ulrich von Hutten.

than we find him founded in the holy Gospel." Luther endorses this statement of Hartmut in an open letter which he wrote as a word of commendation to go with Hartmut's book. The letter begins with the great Reformer's opinion of Hartmut. "I thank my God," writes Luther, "for the grace and favor which you possess in the knowledge of the Christian truth, and in your willingness to suffer for the same. Your words evidently come from the bottom of your heart, and they show that the Word of God is not only in your mouth and ears, but in your heart, making you bold to preach and confess it, not only in words but also in deed, before and against all the world." Truly, an opinion of which Hartmut had reason to feel proud.

Luther wrote the letter for Hartmut's book in March, 1522. On April 14th, Hartmut, in a modest and humble manner, replied. He states in his answer that he is still "far from being perfect Consequently," he says, "I desire of you, my brother, whom I consider a special servant of God, absolution from all the sins I committed, for over my sins I am heartily grieved." He also writes in this letter that Luther's intention of translating the Bible gives him great joy.

One would naturally suppose that this poor exiled knight complained at times in his writings about the injustice done to him.



Landgrave Philip of Hesse.

But not a word of complaint or expression of bitter feeling against his enemies do we find in all that he wrote. His principle was that the magistrates should be obeyed, even if they are unjust in their mandates and punishments, except in matters of faith. An acquaintance of his, a resident of Basel, wrote of him in the year 1522, "Here is also that thoroughly noble and truly Christian man of Kronberg; I have never seen any man who suffered miserable wretchedness with greater calmness. Though the Count Palatine robbed him of all his possessions and banished him—an innocent man, as every one knows—yet he does not in the least lament his loss, and he comforts them who ought to comfort him."

In the begining of 1523 Hartmut came to Wittenberg and was most cordially received by Luther. In a letter to Spalatin Luther wrote, "Hartmut von Kronberg is here; that man, after all that he suffered, still stands remarkably firm in his faith."

During the years of his exile, Hartmut wandered about in many countries seeking assistance in his endeavors to regain possession of his lost estate. For a while he stayed in Bohemia, after that in Switzerland, from there he returned to Germany, then returned again to Switzerland, choosing the city of Basel for his home. Influential friends spoke for him at the royal courts, but in vain. Philip of Hesse did not let go of what he had taken. Hartmut appealed directly to the emperor, but even the imperial verdicts rendered in his favor were in vain. Not until Hartmut communicated with the landgrave personally did he see any prospects of success, but even then he had to wait a number of years longer before an agreement was reached. The intervention of influential friends finally succeeded in inducing the landgrave to yield to their entreaties in Hartmut's behalf and to restore to him his property. This was in 1541, nineteen years after the taking of Kronberg. Hartmut was never reimbursed for the loss he sustained during the long period of privation and exile, and his permanent loss, in money alone, amounted to 30,000 golden florins.

The last years of Hartmut's life were comparatively quiet and peaceful. He entered into his rest on August 7th, 1549, and was buried in the Castle Church at Kronberg.

"The most innocent and pious of knights" is what Hutten calls him in a letter written in his defense, and it was not saying too much. Even among the large number of zealous and fearless witnesses who rose up boldly to testify their faith, Hartmut, for his piety and honesty and the cleanness of his morals, occupies a place of honor. His tombstone shows a crucifix and the kneeling form of the knight and his wife, who was buried at his side. Over Hartmut's head, on a square plate, the following inscription could formerly be read:

Thou Lamb of God, that took'st away
The world's sin, on the cross,
Through Thy death all believers may
Have life, regain their loss.
From this source all my hope did flow,
While yet I sojourned here below.

2. Albrecht Duerer, Artist and Reformer.

In 1471 a son was born to Albrecht Duerer, a goldsmith of Nuremberg. The name given to the child at his baptism was Albrecht, the name of his father. Little Albrecht was destined not only to give undying fame to his native city, but also to adorn the German name the world over, with his magnificent works of art. The reason, however, why we are here mentioning the celebrated painter Albrecht Duerer is not simply that he was a contemporary and a friend of Luther, but because this greatest of German artists has in his matchless paintings and also in writings shown himself a brave confessor of the evangelical truth and a faithful adherent to the Lutheran doctrine. He is one of those of whom Isaiah, the prophet, speaks, when he says of the Messiah that God will "divide him a portion with the great." One of the great men that bowed their knee at the name of Jesus was Albrecht Duerer, one of the greatest in the realm of art. In humble faith he laid hold on the sufferings and death of the Savior and also bore witness of his faith by his imperishable pictures, and otherwise.

Let us first draw a brief sketch of the life of this remarkable man. He received his first instruction in the art of painting from his father, later he was tutored in the workshop of the busy-master Michel Wolgemut. After he had become an artisan in painting and very proficient in engraving and woodcutting as well, he set out, in 1490, to travel about the country, as young artisans were wont to do in those days. He visited the Netherlands, Alsace, and Switzerland. After his return to Nuremberg he was united in marriage with Miss Agnes Frey. Later on, he sojourned in Italy, where he found new inspiration and suggestion for his art in the masterpieces of the great Italian painters. He received orders for pictures from Frederick the Wise, and he also furnished paintings for the church and the castle at Wittenberg. Again he spent several years in travel, and then he was appointed painter to the German Emperor at the imperial court, where he was on a yearly salary. In 1521 we find him again at Nuremberg.

As early as 1518 we see him in friendly intercourse with Luther, whom he also sent a present, very likely some engravings or woodcuts, for which Luther in a letter to the learned Christoph Scheurl expressed his thanks with the following words, "I received at the same time the gift of that excellent man Albrecht Duerer. I would request you to remember me to the good man and to tell him how gratefully I think of him."

At that time Luther's writings were read at Nuremberg with feverish excitement; in fact, this city was one of the first in which

the doctrine of the Wittenberg Reformer found a home. Duerer, among others, as we see from a letter written by Luther's friend Scheurl, was one of the most zealous and eager adherents of Luther. Scheurl wrote, "Above all my Albrecht Duerer requests that Luther's sermon on repentance be translated for him." With keen interest the artist followed up the course of events after Luther had broken away from the Roman church. Elector Frederick the Wise, Luther's noble friend, sent him the Reformer's writings. Duerer wrote in a letter to Spalatin, "I beg that my humble thanks be transmitted to the elector, and that he be requested to let that worthy Martinus



Albrecht Duerer.

Painted by his own hand 1500.

Luther be commended to him on account of the Christian truth, which is of greater consequence to us than all the riches and power of this world, for that perishes in time, but the truth abides forever. And if with God's help I shall come to Doctor Martinus Luther, I will carefully make a portrait of him and engrave it for a perpetual remembrance of that great Christian man, who helped me out of great distresses. And I beg your honor, if Doctor Martinus makes something new that is German, that you will kindly send it to me for my money."

In Antwerp, on the 17th of May, 1521, Duerer received the shocking news from Worms that Luther had been seized near Eise-

nach on his way home from the Diet, and that no trace had been found of him since. Neither Duerer nor the rest of the German people had any idea that Luther was safe at the Wartburg. Duerer wrote the following remarkable words into his diary, "On Friday before Pentecost the news reached Antwerp that Martin Luther had been treacherously captured. At a deserted place near Eisenach ten horsemen traitorously took him away, the betrayed and pious man, enlightened with the Holy Gost. And is he still alive, or did they murder him? I do not know. In either case he suffered for the Christian truth, because he upbraided the unchristian papacy. My greatest fear is that God might let us remain still longer under



View of Nuremberg in the Age of the Reformation.

Copper Engraving by Albrecht Duerer.

their false, blind doctrine, which was invented and set up by men whom they call fathers, and through which the precious Word of God is falsely interpreted in many places, or not preached at all.

"O God in heaven, have mercy on us. O Lord Jesus Christ, pray for Thy people, deliver us in due time, preserve unto us the true, right, Christian faith. Gather Thy scattered sheep with Thy voice, Thy divine Word in Scripture. Help us to know Thy voice and keep us from following human error, so that we, Lord Jesus Christ, may never depart from Thee. Call together the sheep of Thy pasture, some of whom are still in the Roman church. O God, deliver Thy poor people, who by a heavy ban are being oppressed. O Thou most high Heavenly Father, through Thy Son Jesus Christ,

pour into our hearts such light, as will enable us to see which messenger we should hold to, so that we may serve Thee, eternal Heavenly Father, with cheerful hearts.

"And if so be that we lost this man (Luther), we pray Thee, O Heavenly Father, that Thou wouldst again give Thy Holy Spirit to one who will gather again Thy holy Christian Church everywhere, and through whose work all unbelievers will adopt the Christian faith

"O God, if Luther is dead, who will henceforth teach us the holy Gospel so clearly? Alas, O God, what might he yet have written for us in ten, twenty years.



St. Jerome in His Study.

Copper Engraving by Duerer, 1514.



The Suffering Redeemer.

Engraving by Duerer.

"O ye good Christian people, one and all, weep with me for this inspired man of God, and pray with me that God would send us another enlightened man. O ye Christian people, ask God to help, for His judgement is drawing near, and His righteousness will be revealed."

What ardent love for the great Reformer these words express! What a clear understanding of the vital importance of Luther's work they reveal! Imagine the exultant joy that filled Dürer's heart when he heard that his excellent friend, whom he had mourned for dead, was again at work in Wittenberg!

How bravely Germany's greatest painter bore witness of his faith in later years is seen from a letter which he wrote in 1524

to a friend at Antwerp, in which he says: "On account of the Christian faith we must bear shame and danger; we are called heretics. God grant us grace and strengthen us in His Word, for we must obey God rather than men. It were better for us to lose our life and property, than to be cast of God, body and soul, into hell-fire. May God enlighten our adversaries, the poor, miserable, blind people, that they may not perish in their error They have planned many wicked devices, but God's will alone will be done." The man who wrote these lines evidently knew from experience what it was to suffer persecution.

To say much about Albrecht Duerer's wonderful art would require considerably more space than we can here occupy. He painted an enormous number of pictures, representing a great variety of subjects, and expressing a wide diversity of ideas. His paintings are to be seen in the great art galleries throughout Europe. As Luther wrote and sang, Duerer drew and painted. His pictures show us emperors and beggars, civilians and soldiers, cities and villages, taverns, castles, etc. We are particularly interested in his religious paintings. When he was only twenty-seven years old, he painted scenes from the Revelation of St. John, in which he delivered a powerful sermon of Christ, the true Head of the Church, and His victory over Antichrist. That was in the year 1498, when Luther still sang at people's doors in Eisenach. The pictures passed from one to another and served as silent forerunners of the Reformation.

None but a true Christian could paint as Albrecht Duerer did. His grandest masterpieces are fruits of the Lutheran Reformation. He made many pictures of the Virgin Mary, but he did not portray her as "the most blessed Queen of heaven" but as the humble handmaid of whom Luther says, "She seeks no glory and honor, does not vaunt herself for having become the mother of God, but remained a poor citizen among the common people." All pictures of the saints show them in their true character, not as transfigured heavenly forms, such as Roman superstition adores, but as plain friends and associates of all believers; the Apostles, as a rule, are shown with the tokens of their humble birth. Some of his pictures of the Apostles express truths taught by Luther in those days of the Reformation. One of these is his great masterpiece, "Kirchenstützen" (Church-Supports), now to be seen in the art gallery of Munich. It consists of two double pictures, the one showing John and Peter, the other Paul and Mark, in life-size. It is significant that John and Paul stand in the foreground, and Peter and Mark in the background. Peter appears as a learner, of less significance than John, and showing his keys only from a distance. But John, with sublime devotion in his features, is reading in the Scriptures, as if he lay on the Savior's breast and drank in the words which the Savior spoke, and which Peter barely understood. The other picture shows Paul, a valiant warrior, with the sword of martyrdom, a knight defying death and the devil, not looking into the

world, like Mark, but of pensive mind, filled with determination, the teacher of the Gentiles, every inch a man. The painting is a noble Protestant confession, and it was made shortly before the



Sts. John and Peter.



Sts. Mark and Paul.

good Confession at Augsburg, which still resounds through the world to-day, was voiced forth. Words of admonishment to stick to God's Word, and of warning against falling away and hearkening to false prophets were formerly written under these paintings, but

have been abolished. These men speak without words. But through them and in them speaks Albrecht Duerer to the evangelical Christian people until this day. The Scripture passages affixed to these pictures by Duerer himself (2 Pet. 2, 1-3. 1 John 4, 1-3. 2 Tim. 3, 1-7. Mark 12, 38-40) were directed against the Roman Church.

The loftiest height of Duerer's art and the sublimest expression of his faith is seen in his pictures of the suffering of Christ. Duerer is, above all, a painter of Passion pictures. When he was still a goldsmith's apprentice in his father's workshops, he made a beautiful picture in gold representing seven phases of the sufferings of



The Holy Family.

Christ. And ever after, he dedicates his art to the glory of his Savior. The suffering of Christ was the beginning and the ending of all his work. Not in heavenly beauty and repose, but as the Man of Sorrows, the Savior is depicted to us in most of the pictures of Christ painted by Duerer. It has been well said that the picture of Christ, which Luther bore in his heart, was the suffering Christ of Duerer.

Duerer was recognized and honored as a great painter during his lifetime and through the centuries since. Venetian merchants ordered a painting from him for their church. When Emperor Rudolph II heard of the purchase, he bought the picture from the

church and had it carried by four strong men over the Alps to Germany. Raphael sent him a portrait of himself and a book of beautiful drawings. "This German," said Raphael, "would have surpassed us all, if the models of antiquity had been before his eyes," that is, if he had studied in Italy. His travels in Germany were a triumphal procession from city to city. Banquets were everywhere given in his honor, and his fame was sung in poems. But Duerer, a truly great man, remained a humble Christian in spite of the glistening honors of the world. Neither the flattery of the great nor the shining coin of the rich could estrange his heart from the Christian faith. Shortly before his death, in the year 1528, he wrote the following prayer, "God grant me a blessed end, and may God come at my end and give me eternal life."

Among those who spoke words of eulogy after Duerer's death were the two great friends at Wittenberg. Melanchthon, who for a while refused to believe the report of his death, wrote, "It grieves me to see Germany deprived of such an artist, of such a man." And Luther expressed his feelings in a letter as follows: "As regards Duerer, it behooves the pious to mourn that good man. But you may call him blessed, since Christ has so enlightened him and with a blessed end has taken him out of these turbulent times, which will probably become yet more turbulent, so that he, who was worthy of seeing only the best, will not be compelled to see the very worst. May he rest in peace with his fathers. Amen."



3. Leonard Kaiser, A Bavarian Martyr of the Lutheran Faith.

Leonard Kaiser was born in Bavaria about the year 1480, near the time of Luther's birth. He studied at the University of Leipzig, and at the age of forty he was vicar for the priest in Weitztenkirchen, upper Austria.

This particular part of Austria had been mightily affected by the "new doctrine." Not only the peasant folk, but also people of the large cities had flocked to the Gospel, and among them many of the nobility. Lutheran preachers were appointed throughout that part of the country in castles and in residences of the aristocracy. Leonard Kaiser soon became known as a representative of the "new doctrine." His preaching was made all the more impressive by the blameless life he led.

But also in this remote corner of Europe enmity of the pope's men against the adherents of Luther arose. The measures employed by the bishop against the spreading "Lutheranism" became more severe from year to year, and soon his wrath was directed against Kaiser as the chief rock of offense. Kaiser was publicly charged with being a Lutheran and called upon to give account of himself before a consistory at Passau. At this time Kaiser was not yet firmly grounded in the truth of Scripture and was induced to promise that he would renounce Luther's doctrine, books, and associates. He was then released from prison and returned to his post.

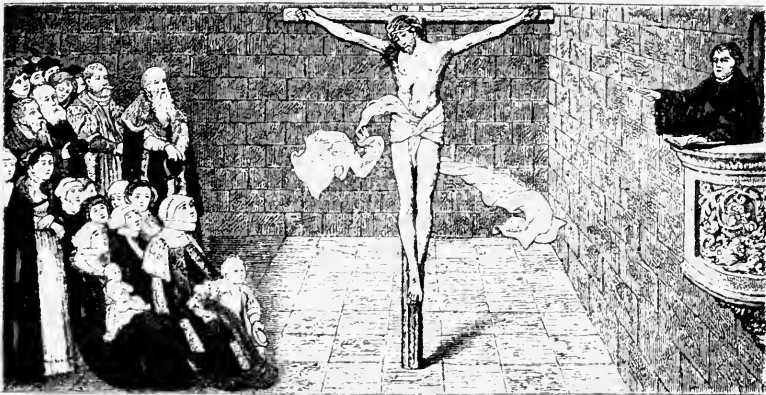
Kaiser's conscience was not at rest. Whenever he read mass, administered the Roman sacraments, heard confession, etc., a voice within him told him all too plainly that he was doing wrong; he had too clearly recognized the superstition connected with those ceremonies and the idolatry of the worship of the Virgin. He became more and more convinced that in his heart he was already estranged from popery. At last he left his parents and friends and went to Wittenberg to see and hear that monk Luther, whom so many praised and many others hated. He went there in order to get enlightenment and, if possible, find rest unto his conscience.

On June 7th, 1525, a few days before Luther's marriage, Kaiser was matriculated in the University of Wittenberg. He remained there for a year and a half, and became well acquainted with Luther. The two men loved and honored each other, and they were sorry to part when Kaiser was called to the bedside of his dying father.

Kaiser was well aware of the danger connected with his return home. He had not kept his promise to renounce Lutheranism; on

the contrary, he had become more closely attached to Luther and had studied the forbidden books very thoroughly. It was comforting, however, for him to know that no one had ever lost his life in Bavaria on account of the Lutheran faith. Besides, he felt that duty called him, and so he left Wittenberg, and arrived home a few hours before his father died.

During the time of Kaiser's sojourn in Wittenberg, sentiment in Bavaria had turned somewhat against the Reformation. After the Diet at Worms it was evident that Luther did not strive to bring about only an outward betterment of the Christian people, but that his work meant the destruction of popery. It was feared that a split in the church and in the nation would result from the



Luther Preaching in the City Church at Wittenberg.

(Altar Painting by the elder Cranach. (Luther's wife and child in foreground.)

spread of Luther's teachings, and even those whose sentiments were with Luther in his fight against the abomination of the papal court and the immorality of the clergy, no longer supported the movement when they saw that it would lead to serious and possibly dangerous dissension among the people. The pope and the emperor had condemned Luther's doctrine, and it was deemed advisable to adopt severe measures against the adherents of those teachings. No blood was shed yet for a while. Those suspected of heresy were compelled to leave the country and were not permitted to take any of their belongings with them; these were confiscated by the duke. A great number of poor people left their homes and went, some here, and some there, to Augsburg, Austria, Switzerland, Saxony. Many of the exiled preachers went to Wittenberg to attend the university and become more familiar with the Evangelical doctrine, which they intended to preach in other parts of Germany. Such

was the state of affairs, when Leonard Kaiser returned to his home in Bavaria.

The strenuous journey and the excitement at the death of his father had so affected him that he lay at home sick abed for five weeks. When he had recovered, he did not take a stand publicly against popery, but he corresponded with his friends at Wittenberg and had the writings of Luther and other men sent to him. This could not remain a secret. He was reported as a heretic, and on the 10th of March, 1527, he was arrested and delivered to the authorities. On the following day he was committed to severe imprisonment at Passau, in the castle of Oberhaus, on a high cliff overlooking the Danube.

Kaiser was not despondent over his painful experience; on the contrary, he rejoiced to know that he was suffering for his faith. As a prisoner of the Lord he immediately wrote to a friend: "Rejoice with me, for the Father of mercy and the God of all comfort has counted me, his unworthy servant and great sinner, worthy of the happy privilege to confess His holy, sweet, and blessed name before the wicked world. Praise be unto Him forever. Amen."

About the middle of May he was summoned for a hearing. Before the clergy of the Passau cathedral he was asked what he thought of the pope's authority, of the mass, the marriage of priests, purgatory, saint-worship, and above all, whether he taught that a sinner is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law. His answers were met with harsh replies by his tormentors. They gave him no chance to make a full statement of his case, and finally condemned him as "a man astray and erring widely from salvation and divine truth." His statements, of course, agreed in every point with Luther's doctrine. Finally he replied to a question with these bold words, "I do not believe that Germany ever had the Gospel, nor heard it right." Then they led him back to his wretched dungeon, which was very filthy and overrun with mice and other vermin.

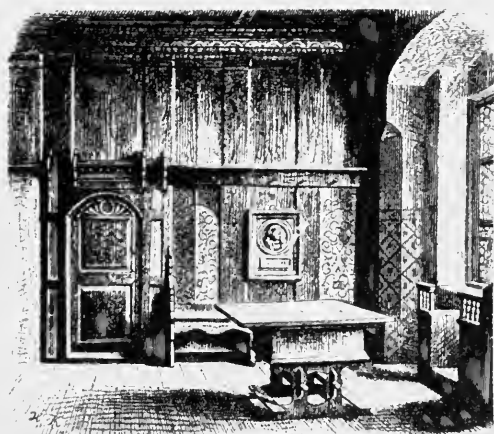
About this time Luther was informed of the perilous plight of his friend and scholar. He at once, on the 20th of May, 1527, sent Kaiser a very consoling letter, which read as follows:

"To my worthy and dear brother in Christ, the faithful and well beloved servant and prisoner of Christ, Leonard Kaiser.

"Grace, strength, and peace in Christ. That your old man, dear Mr. Leonard, is in captivity is the will and calling of Christ, your Savior, who gave Himself also for you and your sin into the hands of the ungodly, to redeem you with His blood and to make you His brother and an heir of eternal life.

"We feel sorry for you and diligently pray that you may be released, not only for your sake, but that you might be of service to many, unto the glory of God, if it be His will. But if it be God's will that you should not be released, you are nevertheless free and secure in spirit. Only see that you are strong and that you steadfastly overcome the weakness of the flesh, or bear it pa-

tiently through the power of Christ, who is with you in the dungeon and will be with you in every trouble, as He has very kindly and faithfully promised in the 91st Psalm, 'I will be with him in trouble.' Therefore you must cry unto Him in prayer with full confidence and refresh and support yourself with comforting psalms in this furious wrath of Satan, that you may be strengthened in the Lord and not speak too leniently and softly against the teeth of behemoth as if you were overcome and feared his haughtiness. Call diligently upon Christ, who is everywhere present and mighty, and defy Satan and mock at his fury and arrogance. For you are sure that he can not harm you; the more he rages, the less he can hurt you. St. Paul says Rom. 8, 'If God be for us, who can be against us,'



Luther's Living Room.

From a Photograph.

and Ps. 8, 'Thou hast put all things under his feet.' He can and will help all who are tempted, for He was in all points tempted like as we are.

"So then, my dearly beloved brother, be strong in the Lord, and be of good comfort in His mighty power, that you may know, bear, love, and praise with a willing heart the fatherly will of God, whether your life be spared or not. May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ grant you to do all this with a willing heart to the glory of His holy Gospel, according to the riches of His glorious grace, who is a Father of mercy and a God of all comfort. Amen. In Him may it be well with you, and pray also for us."

"Wittenberg, on Monday after Cantate, 1527.

"MARTIN LUTHER."

There were also other friends who comforted Kaiser in prison. It was a special treat for him when he had an opportunity to converse at night through the window with this or that friend, and thus to receive comfort, instruction, greetings, and encouragement from without. Luther had appealed to Elector John of Saxony in behalf of the Bavarian confessor. The elector conferred with the bishop of Passau in a warm petition, and many others appealed for the prisoner, but all with no avail. Perhaps the petitions of these "heretics" moved the bishop to even greater severity. At any rate, one hearing followed another, back to prison and out again for yet another trial, so it went on until he was almost out of his head. But he remained firm and would permit neither good nor evil to cause him to depart from Scripture or to deny the truth.

At last the day for the trial was set. On July 18th he was to receive sentence. The day before, the much dreaded Dr. Eck came personally to him as the bishop's messenger and made a last effort to induce him to recant his doctrine. The interview led to a dispute, which, of course, led to no agreement, since Kaiser based himself solely upon Holy Scripture, while the Roman theologian argued on the basis of the popish claims. After another night in the stuffy dungeon, Kaiser was shackled to another prisoner, one of the clergy, who had committed theft and murder, and so he was led away.

On the way to the place of the final trial, Kaiser's fellow-prisoner cursed the bishop horribly and called him a tyrant and a bloodhound. "I am not worthy of walking with you," he said to Kaiser, "for you are an innocent man; but I am guilty of death and shall get what I deserve." Kaiser only cautioned him to be calm. When the procession passed the house of his aunt, she came out and embraced him weeping, and when he was led across the marketplace, his many friends approached him and comforted him. Yet not one of them desired that he should depart from the truth.

At last the prisoner entered the "Pfaffenhof" (preachers' court) in front of the house of the cathedral clergy. In the open air, as was customary in those days, the bar of justice was erected. A great number of armed bishops and townsmen whom the bishop had summoned surrounded the inclosure. The bishop himself presided as judge. Fifteen clergymen of Passau and vicinity, all of them strong papists, constituted the court. The entire court, the judge at the head, were not only prejudiced against Kaiser, but it was a foregone conclusion with them that he was guilty. Before he had been given a chance to say one word, he was looked upon as a criminal worthy of death. The proceedings commenced. An officer announced that a captured Lutheran priest had been brought for trial, and in reply to the officer's question whether the man should now be presented at the prisoners' bar, the bishop gave order that he be brought in. When Kaiser stood in the presence of the court, his shackles were removed, and the announcement was made that

the bishop was compelled to summon Kaiser before his tribunal, because he had given the pope his oath that he would extirpate the "heretical sect." The prisoner was now informed that if he would recant his doctrine, the bishop would show mercy and give him a last chance to save his life. But Kaiser remained firm to the last. He insisted that he could not recant what is taught in Holy Scripture. In this hearing he is said to have shown so much understanding and such a familiarity with Holy Scripture that his listeners were amazed, and a stir was caused among them by his frank and bold confession of the truth before God and man. But



John Eck.

what good did it do him? At the close of the discussion the bishop read the verdict that Kaiser was to be degraded and delivered to the worldly judge.

The verdict was promptly carried out. First the "degradation" was enacted. The official garb worn by the priest at mass was put on Kaiser and then taken off from him piece by piece amid the curses of his accusers. Now he was made to wear an old coat, and a slashed black cap, the "heretics' cap," was put on him. In such array he was turned over to the civil authorities, and with him the malefactor and murderer, who had also received his sentence. Does not this remind us how our Savior was numbered

among the transgressors when he hung on the cross between two criminals? "The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." "Whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."

So Kaiser was transferred to the "wordly arm," through which the Roman church was wont to execute judgement. It was Duke William of Bavaria by whom Kaiser's case was finally disposed of, since he had been born and taken captive in that ruler's realm. Executions of heretics had become so numerous in Bavaria, that to sign death warrants was almost a part of the daily routine work of the duke. Without trying Kaiser's case at all, the duke condemned him as one who had shown an unusual degree of hardness, and sentenced him to be burned at the stake. The bishop had declared him to be a heretic, and that settled the matter for the duke.

On August 11th the prisoner was taken from Oberhaus to Schaerding. His hands were bound, and he was set on a horse, to which he was fastened with chains. So the procession went through the city of Passau. "He was calm and unafraid," says an eyewitness, "and he greeted all the people. At the city's gate his friends took leave from him and begged him publicly not to depart from the truth in life or death." On the way to Schaerding he repeatedly removed the black hat with his loosely fettered hand, greeting acquaintances who rushed into the street, or followed him with sympathetic looks from the windows.

Shortly after Kaiser's arrival at Schaerding his friends came to his room to prepare him for the end. "Mr. Leonard, you must burn," they said. They informed him that the executioner of Burghausen had already been called. "A different bit of news had been better," was his reply, "but," said he, "God's will be done." Soon after the arrival of the executioner the justice of the town appeared in his cell and apprised him of the way he was soon to go. Kaiser then made a testament in which he admonished his relatives to be of one mind, to love each other, and to be charitable to the poor. He advised his relatives, that in case the raging against the Lutheran people would continue, they should rather emigrate and settle where "the Word of God is preached in purity." He was far from wishing that anything should be done to avenge him. He expressly admonished his relatives to obey the magistrates. Every single point in this testament is a splendid testimony of Kaiser's noble and truly Christian spirit.

It was on Friday, the 16th of August, the day after the brilliant celebration of Ascension day. The officers rode up to the courthouse and the two executioners and their servants entered the building. The executioners asked "What is your name?" Answer, "My name is Leonard." The executioner said, "I can not tell you much and teach you, you know how to conduct yourself; I must carry out the command of my sovereign." Leonard replied, "Dear

friend, I do not need your instruction, do what you are commanded to do," and saying these words he stretched forth his hands, which they bound securely, and so they led him away. "But what shall I write," says an eyewitness, "I have never seen such earnestness and fervency in any man. He lifted his face high, raised his breast, and his mouth spoke psalms in Latin so rapidly that the words almost touched each others' heels.

When he saw the multitude encircling the place of execution he exclaimed, "There is the harvest, and the harvesters are needed. Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into His harvest." He pitied the people who in their spiritual darkness had come to see an accursed heretic die. Standing very erect he looked round about him, and his last words before he approached the pyre were words of forgiveness. First of all he forgave those who had brought him here, and prayed that God would likewise forgive him. Then he besought the people to help him pray for his enemies. He asked to be forgiven if by his talk and example (when formerly he did not preach right, sitting in the darkness of popery) he had offended anybody. Finally he exhorted those present to pray for him that he might die in a firm Christian faith, and he prayed for those "who were not yet enlightened."

The judge did not allow him to say any more but called to the executioner, "Put an end to it, you know what you are commanded to do." Kaiser rapidly took off his upper garment, ascended the pyre, and lay down in a hollow. While he was being tied to the stake he requested the people to sing, "Come, Holy Spirit," at the lighting of the fire. And so it was done; when the flames shot up, the multitude standing about, shocked by the heartrending sight, began to sing. Out of the flame the burning man, his voice half smothered with smoke, was heard, saying, "Jesus, I am Thine, save me."

So Kaiser died; one of the noblest martyrs of the Reformation. His ashes was partly taken by friends for remembrance, partly thrown into the River Inn, partly scattered by the wind. The fame of his glorious death spread far and wide into the remotest corners of Germany, and still spreads to-day.

Through a friend of Kaiser's Michael Stifel, Luther was notified of the circumstances that attended the last hours and the death of the blessed martyr, and on the 8th of October, 1527, Luther wrote to Stifel as follows:

"Grace and peace in Christ. I have received the record of the sainted man, Mr. Leonard Kaiser, written by you. O wretched man that I am, altogether unlike Mr. Leonard. I do no more than teach and preach the Word and speak and write of it with many words; but he has proven himself a true and mighty doer of that Word. O that God could count me worthy that not a double but only a half portion of Leonard's spirit be upon me, that I might overcome Satan, I would then willingly yield up this life. Praise be to God

who has granted us unworthy ones to see amidst monsters such glorious sight and splendor of his grace in this blessed man, so that we might know that He has by no means forsaken us. Christ, our dear Lord, grant that we may become followers of this blessed Leonard. He is entitled to be called 'Kaiser' and bear such name with honor, for he has overcome him whose power is so great, that no power on earth can be compared with his. Besides, he is not only a priest but a real bishop, for he gave his own body as a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing to God. He also deserves the name "Leonhardt"*, which is Lionheart, for he has shown himself as a strong and fearless lion. Both his names were foreordained of God, and he is the first who has fulfilled and confirmed the name of his family."



* The German spelling of the name Leonard.

4. Argula of Grumbach, "The German Deborah of the Reformation."

Leonard Kaiser was not the only victim of the persecution which Duke William brought upon Bavaria. Many were compelled, even after they had recanted, to leave their homes and roam as exiles in a strange land, and whoever would not recant, was delivered to the executioner. In Munich alone twenty-nine were executed at one time, and sixteen at Landsberg, because they had spread Luther's doctrine. At this time there lived a woman whose faithful testimony we shall now tell of.

Argula von Grumbach, whose maiden name was Von Stauffen, was born about 1492. Her father, Baron von Stauffen, was the son of a very distinguished Bavarian nobleman, and one of the most chivalrous men of his time. He excelled in many a knightly contest, and his prowess and skill have frequently won for him the prize of victory. When Argula was just ten years of age, her father made her a present of one of those translations of the Bible which had been written before Luther's time, and earnestly commanded her to read it diligently. But several monks urged her not to follow her father's counsel, because the reading of Scripture, they said, was a dangerous thing, and might seduce her. But the Lord trained her early in the school of adversity to give heed unto His Word. Before she was quite grown up, she lost both her parents within five days. She and the six other children would have been left all alone and forsaken if Duke William had not taken them to his court and provided for them. So she was brought up by the duchess and learned "good behavior and the fear of God." Whenever she thought of those days, she said with heartfelt gratitude, "May God be her reward here in time and hereafter in eternity."

At the duke's court she met a Franconian nobleman, Frederick von Grumbach. Attracted by her beauty and intelligence, he wooed and won her. Two sons and two daughters issued from this marriage.

While Argula was busy in her new home as an active Martha, she also, like Mary, engaged in heavenly things and diligently sought the one thing needful. Luther's mighty voice had reached her ear. She again took up her Bible, compared its contents with Luther's writings, and was soon firmly convinced that the monk at Wittenberg taught the truth of the Word of God. She was so sure of the correctness of his doctrine, that she once spoke these bold words: "And even if it would come to this, that Luther would

recant his doctrine, yet would I not be moved. I build not on his intellect, nor on mine or any man's, but on the true rock, which is Christ."

Her conscience now constrained her to tell others of what was filling her heart and mind, and soon a thing came to pass, which caused her joyful faith to shine not only in her family circle, but far beyond. On the 7th of September, 1523, a young man by the name of Arsatius Seehofer, a native of Munich, was charged with Lutheranism and arraigned before the inquisition at the University of Ingolstadt. Seehofer had heard Luther and Melancthon at Wittenberg, and had endeavored to spread the pure Word of God. He had been promptly arrested and put in prison. He was released only at the Duke's special command. Seehofer was a young man, and weak in faith. He allowed himself to be intimidated by the inquisitors, who threatened to burn him at the stake, and he obeyed when commanded to declare that all he had said and written was "a real arch-heresy and roguery." After this denial tears rushed from his eyes, so that one of the judges remarked that he was apparently still a heretic.

When Argula was informed of this occurrence by a traveler from Munich, she was filled with holy indignation at the manner in which they had treated "a mere child of eighteen." She hoped that good and learned men, whose wrath, like hers, was kindled against "those hardened and darkened minds," would take the imprisoned youth's part by writing in his defense. She waited one week, downhearted and despondent. But when even now she saw no man "who would or dared speak," she gathered courage and wrote her famous letter of rebuke to the school at Ingolstadt.

She was fully convinced that she was not only justified in taking this step, but that it was her duty according to Scripture, which says to all, regardless of sex, that they should confess Christ before the world. Her faith beams bright and strong in the letter she sent to the university. She wrote in part as follows: "How will you prosper with your great university, since you act so foolishly and violently against the Word of God and employ force to stop the holy Gospel, and also deny it, as you did by making Arsatius Seehofer swear such an oath and forced him by imprisonment and by threatening with fire to deny Christ and his Word? Indeed, when I think of it, my heart and all my members tremble. What do Luther and Melancthon teach you but the Word of God? You condemn them without having convicted them: did Christ or his Apostles teach you that? Show me where it is written. You great scholars, I find nowhere in the Bible that Christ or His Apostles murdered, burned, imprisoned. You cannot thrust God and His Prophets and Apostles out of heaven, nor can you drive them out of the world; it will not come to pass. You hypocrites, you have brought to nought the commandments of God by your ordinances, but teaching for doctrines the commandments of men is worship-

ping in vain." In conclusion she challenges the university to state to her in writing which of Luther's articles were considered heretical, but at the same time she offers to give account, preferably in the presence of the princes and the whole community, of her faith, being not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ and not afraid of the great scholars. "I don't know Latin," she wrote, "but you know German, having been born and reared in that tongue." One of the last sentences in the remarkable letter is, "Return, return unto the Lord, for He is kind and merciful."

The contents of that message soon became known. To guard against misstatements and misinterpretations she sent a copy of the letter to the authorities of the city of Ingolstadt. With the copy she sent a note stating that as a Christian, who in baptism renounced the devil, she had done only her duty in writing the letter, and that she was not afraid of her enemies, and would, if it should come to that, suffer death for Christ's sake.

Neither the town council nor the university sent Argula a reply. And what became of the young man for whom she had intervened? Seehofer suffered pangs of conscience for having recanted. After having made his escape from prison he at once hastened to Wittenberg, and with tears he told Luther of his weakness and downfall. Luther was convinced of the broken-hearted sinner's sincerity and sent him to the grand-master of Prussia, where he preached the Gospel for a year and a half. Later he was the town-preacher at Winnenden, Wuerttemberg, where after six months of faithful service he died peacefully in the Lord. He was a son of rich parents, who cast him out and disinherited him on account of his Lutheran faith. He suffered this patiently and mentioned his parents only with kind consideration, saying that they cast him off for fear of their sovereign.

Argula begged Duke William soon after her first confession to let the Gospel have free course in his land. But she was soon in a dangerous position. The mighty chancellor von Eck advised the duke that the laws against the Lutheran heresy must be applied to Argula even though she be a woman. Her husband was no support to her. Though he did not immure her, as Roman friends advised him to do, he let her feel what shame she brought upon him and his family by adhering to the Lutheran faith. Argula was aware that perhaps she would have to seal her faith with a martyr's death. She wrote to a cousin, "Even if it came to this that I would perish on account of it, yet would I have grace; as a precious jewel would my soul be to God, the Lord My little ones will be in the Lord's care, He will feed and clothe them: He has promised, He cannot lie."

She exchanged letters with the Wittenbergers. In the year 1524 she began to correspond with the great Reformer himself. Luther wrote of her in a letter to Spalatin, "From the accompanying letter of our Argula you will see what the godly woman has to bear and suffer." She said of Luther, "He has begotten

me again through the Word of God," and she also stated that she wished Luther the reward of God in time and eternity for his translation of the Bible and everything that God had done through him. Toward the end of the year 1524 she advised the Doctor to enter into the holy state of matrimony for a testimony against the "devil's doctrine" (1 Tim. 4, 1 f) forbidding the priests to marry. She became more closely acquainted with him when during the Diet at Angsburg she visited him several times at Coburg and was richly comforted by him. She also spoke words of encouragement to those who at that memorable Diet presented their confession. At that time she wrote to Spalatin, "Fear not, it is God's matter; He that has begun it in us without our aid will know how to protect us; He that keeps Israel will not sleep; the matter is His; He will still the strife and bring it to an expected end."

Because she could not be induced by warnings and threats to desist from confessing and spreading Luther's doctrine, she was banished from the country, and her son, Hans Georg, was discharged from the duke's service. She had long anticipated these consequences and had said years before, "We must leave father, mother, brother, sister, children, goods, and our very life." Nothing is known of her later trials. She went to Franconia, where, on evangelical soil, her weary pilgrimage came to a close. She died in 1554 at Zeilitzheim, near Schweinfurt, and was buried there. Even after her death, a Jesuit by the name of Getzen called her "a Lutheran fury." We honor her memory as that of a great woman and a good soldier of Jesus Christ. She has been held in esteemed remembrance from the early times of the Lutheran church. Ludwig Rabus mentions her in his "Book of Martyrs," of 1556, "because she openly confessed her faith in the face of danger." By a later historian she has been called "the German Deborah of the Reformation."



5. How France Drowned the Reformation in Blood.

Luther's doctrine very soon spread from Germany over to France and as early as 1521 there was a small Lutheran congregation at Meaux, which soon exerted a wholesome influence upon the surrounding country and became the mother congregation of the Lutheran church in France, which still exists to-day. So the light of the Gospel had been lighted through Luther in far away France and shone bright far and wide. The sprouting seed of the Reformation grew from day to day, and those that rallied so enthusiastically to the banner of Christ were mostly people of rank and distinction. The very noblest of the nation turned to the new doctrine and showed their willingness to suffer and to die for the same.

It seemed at first as if the Gospel could spread in France without much opposition. It was even hoped that by and by all of France would turn to the light. Yet it pleased God in His providence to lead the French protestant through centuries of terrible oppression and persecutions.

Duprat, the king's minister, a monster in human form, and Louise of Savoy, the king's immoral mother-in-law, had resolved to entirely exterminate the adherents of Luther. King Francis I joined the wicked alliance, and the fourth scoundrel in the confederacy was Noel Bede, a professor at the University of Paris. The last named was the most rabid of them all in the movement against the Lutherans, and the very thought of burning them at the stake filled his heart with murderous joy. He started with Luther's writings, which were solemnly condemned by the university, and burned them on the charge that they were full of errors and a public menace. The persecution was then carried farther. It was now directed against the poorer class of the people, commonly known as the working class, who had longed for a doctrine that could satisfy their soul, and had joyfully accepted the pure Gospel as preached by Luther. But in France also there were men of prominence among those that gladly turned to the truth, and the man of whom we desire to make special mention here is Lefevre, or Faber, Doctor of Divinity at Paris. Against him the enemies of the evangelical faith directed their fiercest attacks.

Lefevre was born in north-eastern France, in 1455. Though small of stature and of no imposing appearance, he captivated his hearers by his powerful oratory. He was a confirmed papist and in spite of his learning believed all the Roman doctrines and the silliest stories about the saints. He had read the Bible only superficially. One day, however, he chanced to read the letters of St.

Paul, and suddenly his eyes were opened, and he saw the truth. He had now found the very center of the Gospel. "The just shall live by his faith" was henceforth the doctrine that filled and moved his heart, and he at once communicated to his students the blessed truth he had found. Many of them were converted and firmly believed the word that sinners are justified freely by God's grace, through faith in Christ. Brissonnet, the bishop of Meaux, also turned to the Gospel and permitted it to be preached in his territory. The new doctrine reached even the royal court. In spite of Duprat, Beda, and Louise of Savoy, these furious enemies of the truth, the noblest of the kingdom gathered under the cross of Christ. One of this circle of believing souls was Margaret, queen of Navarre, sister of Francis I, who had read Luther's writings and had thereby become convinced of the truth.

When Duprat and Louise of Savoy began to persecute the French "heretics," Lefevre had to flee from Paris. He found a place of refuge at Meaux, and it was due to his burning zeal that flourishing congregations sprang up about Metz and Meaux. In 1522 he translated the New Testament into French, and soon after that the Psalms. The pure Gospel was soon read with great joy by all classes of the people. The report of this movement reached Rome and filled the pope with wrath and terror. He was horrified at the thought that all France would become faithless to him and hurriedly called upon Francis I to destroy the heretics with fire and sword. The king did not hesitate to comply with the pope's order, and the persecutions now became very intense and bitter; the seed of the divine Word was sown amid blood and tears.

Severe measures were resorted to at Meaux as early as 1522. Lefevre and his assistant preachers were forced to flee, and the weak bishop Brissonnet was compelled by cruel threats to cease from preaching the Gospel. After the faithful preachers had thus been removed, the mendicant monks again took charge of the preaching and did all they could to extinguish the bright light of salvation which had just begun to shine in the hearts of the Christians. All their efforts, however, could not succeed in extirpating the good seed of the truth which had been happily sown and was already sprouting. When these Lutherans saw that the public preaching of the truth was no longer permitted, they met for worship secretly, as the first Christians did, when they were persecuted. These French Christians held their services in private houses, in caves, now and then in a vineyard or in the woods, which ever seemed safest under the circumstances. Whoever was best versed in Scripture acted as preacher and comforted, instructed, and admonished the others with the Word of God. So they waited and hoped for a long time that the storm should blow over and all France accept the Gospel. But when the church showed no inclination to discard the popish heresy, some of them resolved to establish the Christian ministry in their midst. They chose a wool worker by the name of Pierre le Clerc, a man well read in Scripture,

to be their pastor. He faithfully performed the duties of the ministry which was committed unto him. Every Sunday and on festival days the congregation met at the home of a very old Christian man named Etienne Mangin. First Le Clerc expounded the Scriptures according to the measure of grace which had been given him, then the assembly united in prayer and sang the psalms and other spiritual songs. After having joined in confessing that they would completely break away from the error of the popish church, they all partook of the Lord's Supper according to our Master's institution.



Le Fevre.

The little congregation soon grew so large that there were frequently more than three hundred men, women, and children in attendance. They came not only from the city of Meaux, but also from surrounding villages, some of them many miles distant.

Chiefly through the efforts of Christian laymen, as for instance Pierre le Clerc, a blessed springtime of Christian life blossomed in France. The Gospel as preached by Luther was spread in the land, though mostly in secret, and everywhere hearts were turned to the only Savior Jesus Christ and found peace in him.

Of course, the larger the number of believers grew, the more they became known. The first one to suffer death for bearing wit-

ness to the Lutheran doctrine was a brother of Pierre le Clerc; his name was Jean. He was one of the most zealous members of the congregation at Meaux and although, like his brother, he was only a wool worker, he went from house to house and encouraged the believers to remain faithful. He even wrote a declaration against the Antichrist at Rome and nailed it to the door of the cathedral. This attracted the attention of the monks, and he was arrested. He was not given much time for his defense, but judgment was quickly pronounced that he should be whipped through the streets of the town for three days, and then branded on the forehead. This did not frighten Le Clerc in the least. Calmly he gave his back to the scourgers. Blood literally flowed in streams from the abused body and marked the streets through which the martyr was led. When on the fourth day a red hot iron was pressed on his brow, a scream was heard in the multitude. It was the sufferer's mother, who in this way gave vent to her grief. She soon recovered herself and said with trembling voice, "May Christ live, and His sign."

The branded hero now went to Metz, where he worked at his trade and besides strove to win souls for the Gospel. One day the young man was misled by his impetuous zeal to destroy the pictures consecrated to Mary during the festival celebrated in the Virgin's honor. Who will describe the fury of the people! The perpetrator was soon detected and punishment by fire meted out. He was not simply burned to death, but to amuse the spectators his tormentors pinched off his members one after the other with iron tongs. Throughout these dreadful tortures Le Clerc remained calm and cheerful and prayed aloud the 115th Psalm. When he spoke the 9th verse, "O Israel, trust thou in the Lord: He is their help and their shield," his voice failed. Slowly roasted by fire, the first martyr of France entered into the joy of his Lord. He died on the 22d of July, 1524.

In the meantime William Farel, a scholar of Lefevre, was spreading the Reformation in southern France with burning zeal. He soon won Anemond de Coct, of whom Luther wrote later, "This French knight is an excellent, learned, and pious man, and wonderfully zealous for the Gospel." Untiringly the two friends worked for the pure doctrine, and it seemed as if the city of Lyons had been destined to become the evangelical camp. But this was not to be. Again the heroic confessors had to flee. Farel went to Basel, Anemond de Coct to Wittenberg to become acquainted with Luther. The great Reformer was delighted with the winning ways of the Frenchman, who was also well satisfied with his visit at Wittenberg.

De Coct now translated the best reformatory writings into French and saw that they were printed. With these books and Lefevre's translation of the New Testament agents went from house to house in France and so scattered the seed of the divine Word. De Coct's death occurred in 1525, and after his death a violent per-

secution took place. The first victims of the new slaughter were Wolfgang Schuch, Dyonisius of Rieux, Ludwig Berquin, and a hermit of Ivoy. When the pyre of the latter was burning, there was among the multitude of the spectators a young man who with a piercing gaze was looking intently at the cheerful face of the martyr. The youth was John Calvin, who at that time was still in the snares of popery and yet was deeply shocked when the doomed man bowed his head in death, saying, "I die believing in my Lord Jesus Christ."



A Lutheran Martyr's Death.

One of the first martyrs of the French Reformation was Wolfgang Schuch, whose name we have mentioned, a native of Germany, who had published the pure doctrine in a city of Lorraine. When the Parisian clergy had heard of this, they demanded of the Lorraine authorities that they deliver the heretic. When the refusal to give up Schuch was met with threats to destroy the city, Schuch gave himself up to his persecutors, who at once sentenced him to death. Calmly and cheerfully, as if he had received a pleasant invitation, the martyr replied to the announcement of the verdict by saying: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord," (Ps. 122.) On the 9th of August, 1525, he was burned to death at Nancy. When the flames covered him

he prayed with a loud voice, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." With this prayer he entered into the joy of his Lord.

About the same time another heroic witness, Louis de Berquin, remained faithful to a martyr's death. He was born about 1490, and was reared in catholic piety. When he grew up and took notice of the evils of his time, his honest heart rebelled against the hypocrisy and the bad life of many of the priests. Still he was far from severing his connection with the French church. When the news of Martin Luther's activity reached France, he did not feel inclined to support the cause of the bold monk at Wittenberg. He still believed the church could be reformed by improving the morals of the priests; he still adhered to the catholic doctrine. But he changed his mind when he started to read the Bible. Later on he procured Luther's writings, which in spite of mandates forbidding their importation were brought in large shipments into France. He found what he had long sought: enlightenment on doubtful points and rest for his conscience. The work of Luther, which at first he condemned, he resolved ardently to further. What caused this change was chiefly the doctrine of a sinner's justification alone by faith, so powerfully taught by Luther, and now so clearly seen in Scripture by Berquin himself.

Berquin was desirous of giving others the knowledge of salvation which he had received. He therefore translated a few of Luther's writings into French. Even though these translations were not printed, but distributed only in manuscript copies, some of them came into the hands of enemies. The doctors at the university denounced Berquin as a heretic. When Noel Beda, that bitter enemy of the truth, had a search made of all the homes of people suspected of being Lutherans, Berquin's house was also entered and his books and manuscripts confiscated. The persecutors were very wroth when they found that Berquin not only had some of Luther's works in his possession, but had written notes in the margins of these books, indicating that he had studied them and accepted their teachings. At one place he had written, "Faith justifies, that is, faith is a cause of our justification. Not the holy Virgin is our hope and our life, but Christ only." In the opinion of the Roman church every one who believed that doctrine was a firebrand of hell. This Berquin must be a horrible heretic, they thought. On June 26th, 1523, the doctors of the university brought in the verdict that those sentences must be condemned, all of Luther's books found in France must be burned, and Berquin must recant, refrain from further writing, and remain in his station as a layman and not meddle with theological questions. Those men would not tolerate that anybody sought the salvation of his soul and peace of conscience anywhere but in their miserable wisdom. Berquin refused to recant. Long discussions followed. Once he was imprisoned, and again was given his liberty. Soon after,

the chancellor Duprat, that bitter enemy of the evangelical faith, called a great synodical meeting for the purpose of passing judgment on Luther's heresies. The synod solemnly condemned Luther's teachings, prohibited the sale and use of his translation of the Bible, and ordered the authorities to punish all heretics. Berquin was again accused. On account of his prominence, twelve councillors instead of four were appointed to investigate the case. They passed the dreadful sentence that Berquin should witness the burning of his writings, and then his tongue should be pierced with an iron instrument; after that, if he survived the torture, he should be imprisoned for the rest of his life. He appealed to the king,



Burning the Writings of Luther and the Bible.

but to no purpose. Far from commuting the sentence of the councillors to one less severe, the judges rather made it more cruel still by sentencing him to be burned at the stake.

Berquin had many friends among the Parisian scholars, who, though they did not agree with him in doctrine, esteemed him highly for his wonderful intellect. They came to him in prison after the sentence of death had been published and begged him to recant this time, as his death could benefit nobody, and he ought to spare himself for better days. So the devil tempted him through his friends to deny the truth. But Berquin remained firm. He still appealed to the king. The king was completely influenced by the clergy, and so no help was to be expected from him. Berquin was

hopelessly doomed. On the 22d of April, 1529, a pyre was built on the Grave-Place. Six hundred soldiers were ordered to prevent the prisoner's escape. The condemned man was conveyed to the place of execution in a cart. His features betrayed no fear; he seemed to be engaged in quiet meditation, "as if he were sitting in his study with his books," as an eye-witness says. Quietly he stepped from the cart. He addressed the people, but the shouting of the soldiers and the monks drowned his voice. He was strangled to death, and his body was burned.

Both the faithfulness of this French nobleman and the atrocity of his tormentors made a deep impression upon the minds of the people. Among the large number of glorious confessors in France none shines brighter than Louis de Berquin.



6. How the Gospel Light Came to the Town of Verden.

On a sunny December day in the year 1525 the bells of the old cathedral at Verden, Hannover, were ringing in a festival. It was the festival of the immaculate conception of Mary. The peasants from the villages were going to church. They were met by a stranger who enquired where they were going. "To Verden," they replied, "it is the festival of Mary." With a smile the stranger answered, "The festival of Mary? She is a woman like other women." The farmers did not understand him, and passed on. The stranger was quite a young man, but his life had been one of varied experience. John Bornemacher was his name. He had been a monk in the convent of Walkenried, in the Harz Mountains, where he had sought peace for his soul. He heard of Luther, the herald of liberty, escaped from the cloister walls, and went to Bremen. There he was joyfully received and was made the pastor of a small church just outside the city. Being anxious to hear Luther personally, he went to Wittenberg, where he found thousands of people, who, like himself, were endued with the spirit of the Reformation, all of them roused to holy enthusiasm by the burning zeal of the great Reformer. Before his departure he had purchased a great many of Luther's tracts to distribute among the people. He had now reached Verden.

He entered the cathedral with the rest of the people. High mass was over, and the bishop had left the church. The congregation was still assembled, listening to a sermon. Mary was being extolled as the mother of God (which she was) and as the holy, sinless virgin (which she was not). Suddenly Bornemacher steps to the front and contradicts the preacher. The people were amazed and stepped back. Bornemacher, frightened at his own recklessness in defending the truth, left the church and ran through the city. Ashamed of his flight he soon returned and was about to reenter the church, when he was captured, brought before the bishop and put on trial. He refused to give any account of himself. To make him give the desired information the bishop called his executioner and ordered him to torture the captive by pinching him with hot irons. The man confessed: he admitted that he had been at Wittenberg; that he had heard Luther, that he had read and spread Luther's writings. That was enough; he was condemned as a heretic worthy of death.

To maintain a show of right, the court Luegenstein was assembled to try the case. The preacher was taken from the prison

and brought before the judges. Cheerfully he confessed his faith in the saving power of the Gospel, and he received his sentence: death by fire.

In a solemn procession the poor man was led to the place of execution, which was outside the city, near the old castle by the city's gate. The pyre was soon in readiness, and the condemned man was tied to a ladder. The wood was set on fire and the heretic cast into the fire. The crackling flames and the thick smoke smothered his last prayer. A folk song of that time describes the entire bloody and murderous procedure and closes with the following words:

"If Christ were not already killed
He ought to come to Verden,"

that is, the people of Verden would soon crucify the Savior himself, if they could lay hands on Him.

The bishop who instigated the killing of Bornemacher was Duke Christopher of Brunswick, who as a mere boy was consecrated bishop of Verden. At the time of which we tell at the beginning of this narrative he was a handsome, tall man, but without faith and godliness, like so many prominent preachers in those days. He was a man of ungovernable passion and pleasure-seeking in the extreme. This young bishop of Verden was aware that the church needed a reformation, but the reformation he had in mind was nothing more than a reestablishment of old formalities, and by insisting upon strict order in the church he endeavored to stay the impending ruin. He demanded that the clergy officiating in his cathedral lay aside their secular dress, and above all he objected to their wearing a beard. One of the reverend gentlemen was threatened with being deprived of his income because he would not dispense with his beard. The bishop further troubled the priests with constant processions and vigils, and that without any consideration for old age and physical infirmity. Whoever was tardy was compelled to say five Paternosters and five Ave Marias at the altar. In this way bishop Christopher tried to reform his bishopric. He was willing also to set a good example in that sort of reformation. When he stood before the altar in his priestly garb, which his mother had made out of her bridal dress, his head covered with a mitre, which she had adorned with her costliest pearls and other gems, singing the mass with sonorous voice, he considered himself in no wise lacking anything that enters into the make-up of a model bishop.

The bishop was himself unconverted, and, of course converted nobody by such means. The only thing that could do any good was the pure, unadulterated, genuine Gospel, but he set himself against that with all the energy of his will and put forth every effort to keep it out of his bishopric. When Lutheranism had nevertheless found its way into many hearts even far beyond the limits of his territory, he entered into an agreement with his clergy to help each other and with united strength to stop the spreading

of the Lutheran heresy. Poor Bornemacher had been the first victim of this compact. In the years following his death the people of Verden supported the emperor in his fight against the church of the Reformation.—

Decades have passed since the first witness of the truth in the bishopric of Verden was murdered. It is now the Christmas-tide of the year 1557. There is a great commotion in the bishop's residence at Verden. Servants are running to and fro, boxes are being hurriedly packed and placed on a wagon, over sixty horses are ready saddled or hitched to conveyances—what does it all mean? The bishop is preparing for a journey. Whereto? To Berlin. What, an old man of sixty undertaking a journey from Verden to Berlin in winter? It must be a matter of extraordinary importance to induce a man of that age to undertake such a far trip at such an unfavorable time of the year. What was the trouble? The bishop was financially embarrassed. He had been short of money all his life, and by this time he was head over heels in debt. His desire to make show, his gorgeous apparel, his luxurious meals, his expensive journeys, his lawsuits, his expeditions of war, all this had cost an enormous amount of money. He had tried in every possible way, by hook and crook, to secure the means wherewith to meet his obligations. He had mortgaged castles and estates, made himself guilty of graft and embezzlement on a large scale, and even plundered the common treasury and the private residences of his priests. After the Diet at Augsburg he pawned his diamond-covered headgear and his precious staff in order to get money for his homeward journey. But now there was no possible way of getting any more money; his credit was gone. So he resolved to go to Berlin, where he hoped to be able to enter into an agreement which would secure rest and comfort for his last days and protection against the demands of his creditors. But he did not get as far as Berlin. He took sick on the way, had to come down from his horse and continue his journey in a wagon, and then had to be taken out of the wagon and put to bed. An attack of suffocation ended his life a few hours later. He was buried in his cathedral.

Duke George of Brunswick was chosen as his successor. He was a brother of the deceased, but the very opposite in character. While Christopher had lived only for himself, George was self-sacrificing, denied himself the comforts and some of the necessities of life, carefully supervised the management of his bishopric in all its branches, and thus endeavored to restore to his land what another had robbed.

From the beginning, when he first began to reign, George promised to tolerate the Lutheran religion in his land. He was personally not far from accepting the truth and eventually did embrace the Lutheran faith. This was brought about in the following manner.

One day in the year 1563 there was a banquet at the bishop's residence. The bishop delighted in having his learned friends at

his table and engaging with them in serious conversation. The Augsburg Confession was also talked about. A goodly number of his intimate friends were already on the side of the Augsburg Confession. Suddenly one of the guests began boldly to praise the Lutheran Confession and said it was a book in full harmony with the Word of God and finally asked the bishop to examine the Confession carefully and in the fear of God. And what was the result? The bishop read the Confession after the meal, he read it again and for the third time, and became convinced that the popish doctrine is flatly against Scripture and the Lutheran in perfect harmony with it. He announced his changed position to the assembled clergy, who were already so far advanced in the knowledge of the truth that they gave a willing ear to the bishop's plea to join hands with the workers for the cause of true Christianity. So the bishop officially gave permission to introduce the article of justification by faith, and to give the cup to the laity, and that the clergy may marry.

The churches retained their old ornaments, the pictures of saints and the various altars, and priests continued to wear their garb, but the Holy Scriptures had taken the place of ordinances of men as the only guide in all matters of doctrine and life, and consequently the mass, pilgrimages, fastings, and similar practices were soon things of the past.

When Bishop George felt his end approaching he requested the Sacrament and partook of it in accordance with Christ's institution. He made the confession that he looked alone to Christ's merits for a blessed end. He fell asleep on the 4th of December, 1566, and was deeply mourned by his subjects, who under his rulership had enjoyed his protection and a peaceable life. He was laid to rest in the cathedral beside his brother Christopher. The two bodies are enclosed by a monument of sandstone, on the surface of which their pictures are chiselled.

After the death of George there were efficient preachers at Verden. Most of the priests who still adhered to the pope had died. The mass was abolished, and the Latin chants of the priests were supplanted by Luther's German hymns. The preaching of the pure Word of God was made the main part of the service. The Lutheran liturgy was introduced on October 10th, 1568. A few years later the Formula of Concord was adopted and signed by all the preachers of the bishopric. The truth had won the victory at Verden.

7. Patrick Hamilton, A Martyr of Royal Line.

A Scotchman of royal blood, who opened a path for the Gospel in his home country and sealed his allegiance to Luther's doctrine with his blood is surely worthy of the monument that we shall endeavor, by this brief biography, to erect in his honor. His name was Patrick Hamilton. He was born near Glasgow, about 1504. His father was Sir Patrick Hamilton, son of Lord of Hamilton and Princess Mary, daughter of King James II of Scotland. Sir Patrick was the first of Scottish knights when Scottish chivalry was in the height of its glory.

Brought up among relatives of rank and refinement, Patrick became distinguished for high breeding and courtesy and for an intense love for all humanistic and liberal studies. By the grace of God he not only became the first reformer of Scotland, but also a martyr to the true doctrine.

When Hamilton was only fourteen years old, the influence of his powerful family made him Abbot of Ferne, and the revenues gave him means to study abroad. He entered the college of Montaigu in Paris, and in 1520 he became a Master of Arts. During Hamilton's residence in Paris, Luther was much talked of in that city. "An impulse was propagated in the University . . . the strong hand of Luther knocked violently at its gates, and the sound went through all its studious halls and cloisters," says Lorimer. It was chiefly the Disputation between Luther and Eck that caused such a stir in Paris. The question in the controversy had been, whether the pope had any preeminence over other bishops—which the Roman church taught, and Luther denied. A great many copies of this Disputation were brought to Paris, and the university was called upon to examine the book and to render an opinion thereon. All Europe waited anxiously for the decision, for the learned doctors of the university were widely known among men of learning. The university solemnly decreed, on the 15th of April, 1521, in the presence of students from every country in Christendom, that Luther was a heretic, and that his works should be publicly thrown into the flames. This was done.

From Paris Hamilton went to the University of Louvain. He returned to Scotland and became a member of the University of St. Andrews, where he was later admitted in the Faculty of Arts. St. Andrews was the ecclesiastical and literary capital of the kingdom, the Vatican of Scotland.

At the end of 1524, books of Luther were brought into Scotland and created a sensation, as they did everywhere. Gavin Dunbar, the old bishop of Aberdeen, was the first to find it out, discovering

one day a volume of Luther in his own town. As like discoveries were made in St. Andrews, Linlithgow, and other places, the affair was brought before Parliament.

On July 17th, 1525, the clergy procured the passing of the following act, "Forasmuch as the damnable opinions and heresy are spread in divers countries by the heretic Luther and his disciples, . . . therefore, that no manner of person, stranger, that happens to arrive with the ships within any part of this realm, bring with him any books or works of said Luther, his disciples or servants, dispute or rehearse his heresies or opinions, unless it be to the confusion thereof, under pain of escheating of their ships and goods, and putting of their persons in prison." In spite of these and even more severe measures, the Lutheran doctrine spread very rapidly throughout the land. Luther's tracts were distributed in large numbers and many copies of Tyndale's translation of the Bible found their way into Scottish homes and won Scottish hearts for the Gospel. Only one thing was still wanting—the voice of the living preacher. The first that God prepared and produced was Patrick Hamilton.

In 1526 Hamilton began to declare openly his new convictions, in the cathedral and elsewhere, and soon the report of his heresy was carried to the ears of the archbishop. In 1527 Beaton made an investigation and found that Hamilton was "inflamed with heresy, disputing, holding, and maintaining divers heresies of Martin Luther and his followers, repugnant to the faith;" whereupon he proceeded to have him formally summoned and accused.

Hamilton was not ready just yet for the crown of martyrdom, and so he went to Germany and spent some time at Wittenberg, where "he became familiar," says Knox, "with those lights and notable servants of Jesus Christ at that time, Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon, and Francis Lambert." At Wittenberg the young Scotch abbot found the monasteries deserted, and Luther, once a monk, living happily in a few rooms of the empty Augustinian cloister, with his new-married wife, a converted and fugitive nun, Catharina von Bora. He saw the churches of the city purged of the old superstitions. He heard the gospel-hymns of Luther sung in loud and fervent chorus by crowded congregations. He saw the excellent pastor, John Bugenhagen, standing in the pulpit of the ancient parish church, preaching the Word of life. He listened with admiration to the eloquence of Luther poured forth upon select congregations of courtiers and academics from the pulpit of the Castle Church. In both churches he saw the sacrament of the Lord's body and blood administered to the communicants in both kinds. Luther's New Testament was read everywhere. The little city was crowded to inconvenience with the multitude of students who flocked from all parts of Europe to sit at the feet of Luther and Melanchthon.

When the pestilence broke out in Wittenberg, the Scots went to Marburg for the opening of the new university, where they were

enrolled as numbers 37, 38, and 39. Here Hamilton grew firmer and firmer in the conviction that through the German reformers the old truth of the Word of God was proclaimed anew. Lambert said of Hamilton, "I can truly say that I have seldom met with anyone who conversed on the Word of God with greater spirituality and earnestness of feeling."

For a time Hamilton was a co-worker of the Englishman Tyndale, who translated the Bible into English and was burned for the Lutheran faith. In Marburg, where Tyndale had found refuge



Catherine von Bora.

From the Painting by Lucas Cranach.

when pursued by his enemies, he and Hamilton lived and labored together. Hamilton at this time put forth a series of theses to be publicly defended. From them it is clear that Hamilton was a close student of Luther, especially of his "Freedom of a Christian Man". Having read Luther, Hamilton became a Lutheran in doctrine; having seen and talked with Luther, and lived for time in the element which the great Reformer spread around him, Hamilton became a Lutheran in spirit as well as in doctrine. The sight of Luther's firm courage and constancy gave new strength to the young Scot, and he could not long admire such a shining example of heroism of faith without himself being converted into an evangelical hero. After six

months in Lutheran Germany, Hamilton returned to Scotland, ready to die for the Gospel.

He preached at Kincavel, and also in all the country round. In consequence of his preaching the monks of Kelso complained of "these evil times, in the increase of Lutheranism", and the canons of Holyrood bewailed "these wretched Lutheran times". Soon after his return to Scotland, Hamilton married a young lady of noble rank. He wished to show, by deed as well as word, how entirely he had cast off the usurped and oppressive tyranny of Rome.

A Lutheran missionary, with royal blood in his veins, was a most dangerous heretic in Scotland. There was no time to be lost. Archbishop Beaton took the first step by inviting Hamilton for a conference with him at St. Andrews. Before he went, Hamilton told his relatives that he had not long to live. But as Luther went to Worms in spite of the dangers, to confess his faith, so Hamilton went to St. Andrews in spite of dangers, to confess his faith. He arrived about the middle of January, 1528, and had several private conferences with the archbishop and his councillors. Alexander Alane especially, a learned man and filled with burning zeal for popery, made every effort to win back the apostate priest to the doctrines of Rome. But the young Lutheran divine proved more than a match for the catholic scholar and sent him away to his study shaken in his old faith. He became Hamilton's fervent admirer and the first historian of his teaching, trial, and martyrdom.

Alexander Campbell, prior to the Dominicans, also often talked with Hamilton and acknowledged the truth of his words. "Yes, the church is in need of reformation in many ways", the prior said. But later he betrayed and accused Hamilton.

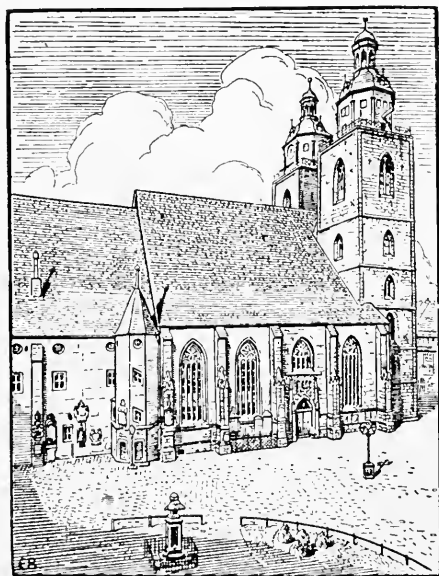
When Beaton and his advisors thought they had gathered enough material for Hamilton's conviction, they issued a summons requiring him to appear before an assembly of clergymen on a certain day, to answer to the charge of holding and teaching divers heresies. Hamilton's friends begged him to flee. But, he said, he had come thither to confirm the minds of the godly by his death as a martyr to the truth, and to turn his back now would be to lay a stumbling block in their path, and to cause some of them to fall. An unsuccessful attempt was made to rescue him by force. An appeal was made to the king, but the advice was coldly given "that the reformer make his peace with the church".

Hamilton's thirteen articles of faith were submitted to a council of theologians. Seven of these articles treat of the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith, the other six treat of purgatory, auricular confession, etc.; one declares the pope to be the Antichrist. In a few days the council judged all the articles to be heretical. This judgment was to be presented at a solemn meeting of the highest dignitaries of the church on the last day of February, 1528.

The captain of the castle with an armed band arrested Hamilton. Everything was now ready for the last act of the tragedy. On

the appointed day the people crowded to the cathedral at an early hour, and the archbishop passed from the castle with a long train of bishops, abbots, priors, and doctors, and took his seat on the chief bench of the tribunal of heresy. Friar Campbell read the articles with a loud voice and charged them one by one upon the prisoner and argued that the articles were heretical; but Hamilton gently and ably defended himself.

“Heretic”! Campbell exclaimed, “Thou saidst it was lawful for all men to read the Word of God, and especially the New Testament”.



The City Church. Wittenberg.

Hamilton calmly answered, “I wot not if I said so; but I say now it IS reason and lawful to all men that have souls to read the Word of God, and that they are able to understand the same, and in particular the latter will and testament of Jesus Christ, whereby they may acknowledge their sins and repent of the same, and amend their lives by faith and repentance, and come to the mercy of God by Christ Jesus”.

“Now, farther, thou sayest it is not lawful to worship imagery”.

“I say no more than what God spake in the Second Commandment, ‘Thou shalt not make any graven image; thou shalt not bow down to them to worship them’.”

"Heretic! Thou sayest it is but lost labor to pray to or call upon saints, and in particular on the blessed Virgin Mary, or John, James, Peter, or Paul, as mediators to God for us".

"I say with Paul, 'There is no mediator betwixt God and man, but Christ Jesus, His Son'; and whatsoever they be who call or pray to any saint departed, they spoil Christ Jesus of His office".

So the hearing went on, until finally the Dominican Campbell turned to the judges, saying, "You hear he denies the institutions of holy Kirk, and the authority of our holy father, the pope. I need not to accuse him any more".

Such was Patrick Hamilton's noble confession in the face of that hostile tribunal and large assembly. He spoke of the truth of God and disguised nothing, though well aware what his plain speech would cost him.

With unanimous consent of the judges, among whom, by the way, were some grossly immoral men, and one boy of thirteen years, the archbishop solemnly pronounced sentence, ". . . We have found the same Magister Patrick many ways infamed with heresy, We have found also that he hath affirmed, published, and taught divers opinions of Luther and wicked heresies after that he was summoned to appear before us and our council. . . . and therefore do we judge and pronounce him to be delivered over to the secular power to be punished, and his goods to be confiscated". The tribunal instantly rose, and Hamilton was led back to prison under a guard several thousand strong. The executioners at once prepared the stake at which he was to be burned.

Followed by his servant and a few intimate friends, Hamilton accompanied the captain with a quick step to the place of burning, carrying in his right hand a copy of the four Gospels. He uncovered his head, and, lifting up his eyes to heaven, addressed himself in silent prayer to Him who alone could give him a martyr's strength and victory. The book he gave to one of his friends; taking off his cap and gown and other upper garments, he gave them to his servant, with the words: "This will not profit in the fire; they will profit thee. After this, of me thou canst receive no commodity, except the example of my death, which I pray thee bear in mind. For albeit it be bitter to the flesh, and fearful before man, yet it is the entrance to eternal life, which none shall possess that denies Christ Jesus before this wicked generation."

The officials of the archbishop offered him his life if he would recant his confession. "As to my confession, I will not deny it for awe of your fire, for my confession and belief is in Christ Jesus. Therefore I will not deny it; and I will rather be content that my body burn in this fire for confession of my faith in Christ, than my soul should burn in the fire of hell for denying the same. But as to the sentence pronounced against me this day by the bishops and doctors, I here, in the presence of you all, appeal contrary the said sentence and judgment given against me, and take me to the mercy of God."

One writer says: "The servant of God entered in contemplation and prayer to Almighty God to be merciful to the people who persecuted him, for there were many of them blinded in ignorance, that they knew not what they did. He also besought Christ Jesus to be Mediator for him to the Father, and that He would strengthen him with His Holy Spirit, that he might steadfastly abide the cruel pains and flames of fire prepared for him."



University of Wittenberg.

XVIII. Century Engraving.

The martyr was bound to the stake with an iron chain. Fire was now laid to the pile of wood and coals, and it exploded some powder placed among the fagots. The martyr's left hand and left cheek were scorched by the explosion. Though thrice kindled, the flames took no steady hold of the pile. It took some time to fetch more wood and powder, and the martyr suffered terribly. Nevertheless he spoke words of comfort to the bystanders and addressed

himself calmly to more than one of the friars, who molested him with their cries, bidding him pray to the Virgin Mary. To one he said with a smile, "You are late with your advice. If I had chosen to recant, I need not have been here." Friar Campbell, his betrayer and accuser, was foremost among his tormentors. To him Hamilton at last said, "Wicked man! Thou knowest it is the truth of God for which I now suffer. So much thou didst confess to me in private, and thereupon I appeal thee to answer before the judgment-seat of Christ."

Surrounded and devoured by fierce flames he still remembered his widowed mother and commended her to the care of his friends, as Christ on the cross commended his mother to John. When he was nearly burned through the middle by the fiery chain, some one wished a last sign if he had faith in the doctrine for which he was dying. He raised three fingers of his half-consumed hand, and held them up steadily 'till he died. His last words were, "How long, Lord, shall darkness overwhelm this kingdom? How long wilt Thou suffer this tyranny of men? Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Hamilton was only twenty-four years old when he suffered death for his Lutheran faith. The doctors of Louvain with cruel joy thanked Beaton for his "services to faith" and congratulated the University of St. Andrews upon the honors it had earned by such an "edifying" display of Catholic zeal. At Marburg the grief of the Reformers was equalled only by their admiration.

Hamilton's youth, his noble blood, his recent marriage, and his unflinching courage moved the hearts of the spectators: "the smoke of Patrick Hamilton infected all it blew on." "The faith for which Hamilton died shall be our faith," the people said. And so it was. Hamilton's doctrine lived after him and wrought with a heavenlike virtue in the nation's heart, till it leavened the whole lump.

The skippers of Leith were diligent importers of Lutheran books and English New Testaments, and it was by the frequent reading and hearing of these writings that the people, often coming together under cover of night, were able to increase their knowledge of divine truth, and to cherish and confirm their new and better faith. To the north of St. Andrews, especially, many people turned to Lutheranism. There still exists in that district a village named Luthermoor, and Luther's Bridge, and Luther's Mill, and Luther's Torrent, which falls into the North Esk. There Henry Forrest, Scotland's second martyr, was burned for his Lutheran faith. The same judgement fell upon other confessors during the following years, others saved their life by flight, losing all they had. One of these was John McAlpine, Prior to the monastery of Perth, who fled to Wittenberg in 1540 and became a friend of Luther and Melanchthon. Upon their recommendation he was made a professor of theology in the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, and was one of the translators of the Bible into Danish.

Thus streams of blessings flowed from Hamilton's noble confession over Scotland and other countries.

Remarkable incidents occurred in the life of Alexander Alane, whom we already know as one of Hamilton's opponents, who, however, could not withstand the power of Hamilton's spirit and eloquence. He spoke his mind regarding the cruelty displayed in Hamilton's death. Archbishop Beaton laid a trap for him by appointing him preacher before a provincial synod of clergy in St. Andrews. He preached on the duty of the clergy to feed the flock and to set a good example. His words gave mortal offense to the hearers, who in no wise were such pastors as they should have been. Alane was put into a filthy dungeon, kicked on the head, and almost killed. Friends helped him to escape on a ship ready to sail for Germany. He reached Wittenberg in 1533, where Melancthon changed his name to Alesius, that is, the Wanderer, and from that time he was known as Alexander Alesius. At Wittenberg he printed two eloquent epistles pleading with the king of Scots to permit the reading of the Bible in the mother tongue. In 1535 he went to England. The king made him a teacher of theology at Cambridge. In 1540 Elector Joachim II of Brandenburg made him professor of theology at Frankfort, and later he accepted a position as professor at the University of Leipzig. For several terms he was even Rector of the University. Full of honors, he died March 17, 1565.

Patrick Hamilton's sister, Catherine, was arraigned before the tribunal in the church of Holyrood, and pleaded her own cause with great spirit and courage. She answered the priests very cleverly. Being questioned on the point of justification by works, she answered simply that she believed no person could be saved by his works. The lawyer held a long discourse with her, telling her that there were divers sorts of works, works of congruity and works of condignity, in the application whereof he consumed much time. The young woman growing thereupon into a chafe, cried out, "Work here, work there, what kind of working is all this? I know perfectly that no works can save me but the works of Christ, my Savior." The king was sitting on the bench and laughed heartily at her answer; yet taking the gentlewoman aside, he moved her to recant her opinions. She granted to his princely entreaties what she had stoutly refused to the lawyer's arguments and sophistical distinctions, and professing her submission to the authority of the church, she was allowed to escape. But she again became a Lutheran, for in 1539 we find her in England, an exile for her faith. She was not the only fugitive from Scotland for her religion; many others, some of the nobility, fled out of Scotland for reading the Scripture in English, saying that if they were taken they should be put to execution.

But the progress of the Reformation could only be temporarily halted. The most striking and impressive proof of the gains made

by the Lutheran movement in Scotland at the close of the Hamilton period was shown in the passing of the Act of Parliament, March 15, 1543, which ordained "that it should be lawful to every man to use the benefit of the translation which then they had of the Bible and New Testament, together with the benefit of other treatises containing wholesome doctrine."

Though later on fresh persecutions broke out for a time, this law was never repealed.

8. Antonius Corvinus, A Faithful Confessor of Christ.

The great blessings which we are enjoying in having the pure Gospel is not due to the fighting of protestant armies with weapons of steel, neither is it due to the shrewdness of wise statesmen, but it is due, under God, to the men that were willing to sacrifice liberty and life for the Gospel. Through much labor, through great self-denial and personal sacrifice, the treasure of the Gospel that we are enjoying in peace and quiet to-day, has become ours. One of those noble men who labored and suffered for the cause of the truth was Antonius Corvinus, of Calenberg-Goettingen, Hannover.

For five years the excellent Duchess Elisabeth had acted as guardian of her son Eric and during this time had succeeded in establishing Lutheranism in Hannover. Her right hand man in that work was Superintendent Corvinus, who labored untiringly in Calenberg-Goettingen to bring about the desired reformation. About 1544 he wrote, "False worship is done away, the true is introduced. The convents have the Word of God and are reformed. The pulpits are being supplied, as much as possible, with pious and proficient men. There is a willingness among the people to reopen hospitals and to improve the sadly neglected schools, in short, to do everything that might tend to the furthering of God's Word and the upbuilding of his dear church." Corvin made every possible effort, by calling synodical meetings, by visiting congregations, by publishing an excellent book of sermons and other writings, to furnish the people with an able ministry. The question now was, how will young Prince Eric take to the change that the churches of his realm had undergone?

This was soon to be seen. In the year 1545 Elisabeth gave the government into the hands of Eric, who had then reached his majority. She dismissed him from her guardianship with loving, motherly admonition. In a little book written for him with her own hand she gave him most excellent advice. Above all, she earnestly commended to his care the Word of God, and entreated him to remain faithful to God.

Soon after he had taken charge of the government, Eric, contrary to the advice of his mother and his councillors, resolved to attend the diet which Emperor Charles V had called to Regensburg. This diet was called for the express purpose of devising ways and means to remedy the split in the church. The protestants could not help seeing that action was to be taken against them. The object of the diet was to devise a way of totally extirpating the Lutheran "heresy." With a heavy heart Elisabeth saw her son go.

Before his departure for Regensburg, Eric was earnestly admonished by the court-chaplain to stand up for the Gospel and to remain firm; he also partook of the Lord's Supper. The pastor told him to sacrifice everything, even his life, rather than to depart from the religion in which he had been brought up. It is remarkable that Luther had a clearer insight into the young prince's character than those who were much more closely associated with him. After he had seen Eric, who with his mother had visited Wittenberg, he wrote to Corvin: "The devil is crafty and very quick, therefore cease not to pray and to admonish. It is to be feared



Knights in Deadly Conflict.

Marble-relief on Tomb of Maximilian I. at Innsbruck.

that the young prince, if he will associate a great deal with our adversaries, will by their great prominence be easily made to fall away. Let me frankly tell you this." It happened just as Luther had anticipated.

At Regensburg Eric went over to the side of Emperor Charles V and the other enemies of the Reformation, though nominally he was still a protestant prince. Soon after, he was appointed commander of 2500 horsemen and some infantry. He did not then return to the catholic church, but by accompanying the emperor to mass he showed how little he cared for his Lutheran confession. He believed that by taking the emperor's part he could gain political advantages and, perhaps, achieve great honor.

In the religious war that followed, Eric was ordered to besiege Bremen with the troops under his command. The city, however, offered brave resistance and asked the help of other cities that were friendly to the Gospel. Hamburg, Lueneburg, Brunswick, and Goettingen promptly came to the help of their sister-city. When their army approached, Eric lifted the siege of Bremen and went to meet the coming army. He met them at Drakenburg. When the Lutheran soldiers saw the enemy, they fell on their knees and sang, "In peace and joy I now depart." Their commander told them to trust in God, and to give up, if necessary, property and life for the pure doctrine. Then they rushed against the enemy. It was the first time in this unhappy war that the protestants realized that they were fighting for their faith, and they gained the victory. Eric's army was routed; they left their weapons behind, and Eric himself barely escaped alive.



German Soldierry. 1540.

Engraving by Hans Sebald Beham

Still, there were dark days coming for the Gospel's cause. On the 15th of May Charles V issued the so-called Interim. "Interim" means "meanwhile." This Interim was a law governing in the meantime all matters of religion, until a council of churches could be called. This Interim was simply a suppression of the Word of God. It prescribed the catholic doctrine in all the main points, and so established the catholic religion in Germany. And Duke Eric was one of the first of the protestant princes who accepted the Interim and promised to subdue the protestant doctrine. He went a step farther and himself turned back to the catholic faith. He also tried to induce his wife Sidonia to depart from the Gospel truth, but he did not succeed. She declared that she was determined to abide to the end of her days by the faith and doctrine

which she was now confessing and that she would allow neither pain nor pleasure, neither good nor ill fortune, to separate her from the truth, but that she was willing to leave her home and her people and all things on earth for conscience' sake.

Eric returned home with a feeling of estrangement from his own people and their faith, embittered especially against his mother and his wife. Mistrusting the Germans, he had surrounded himself with Spaniards. Spaniards were his body-guard, Spaniards were his councilors.



Spanish Soldiers in Germany.

A Contemporary Engraving.

His mother Elisabeth, with the faithful assistance of Corvinus, led the opposition against the Interim in Eric's domain. In the year 1549 she called the clergy of the land together for a synod at Muenden. More than a hundred and forty were in attendance. Elisabeth herself was present. Corvinus had brought with him a declaration against the Interim, which was unanimously accepted and signed by all. All solemnly promised to adhere to the Lutheran doctrine.

Corvin made every effort to strengthen his brethren in their confession. Preachers who had been driven away on account of the Interim found counsel and help with Corvinus and Elisabeth, among them Justus Jonas and Aquilla. A reward of one thousand florins was offered for the latter's head. But soon Corvinus' own faith was put to a severe test.

On November 2, 1549, Eric sent Spanish soldiers to seize Corvinus in his home and to take him, together with Walter Hocker, pastor at Pattenson, to Calenberg. The soldiers destroyed Corvinus' valuable library, and led him away a prisoner. It seems that the emperor himself had instigated the arrest, for Eric later referred to "the command of imperial majesty," when speaking of the outrage.

The prince believed it would be easy now to enforce the Interim, that is, to suppress the Lutheran doctrine. Ruthlessly he went to work. Churches and convents were ordered to put the discarded decorations back where they had been, to return to the former clerical garb, and a visitation was instituted for the purpose of introducing again the catholic usages in all the churches. Some of the clergy submitted to this, others remained steadfast, and were deposed. Spanish soldiers, like a hostile army, raged throughout the land; all the German Bibles, catechisms, prayer-books, and postils they could find were confiscated, torn to pieces, and burned.

We can imagine how all this made Elisabeth's heart bleed. She had brought up Eric with great care, hoping he would protect the Gospel and continue her life-work, the reformation of the principality. And now her son had become an enemy of the Gospel and did all he could to destroy the work of her hands. After Corvinus' arrest she wrote to her son: "O God, comfort me, a poor, miserable, sorrowful mother! What have I born into this world and reared! To deny the known truth is a sin which is forgiven neither in this world nor in the world to come. Surely, to insult the poor servants of the Word, to drag them back and forth and to treat them with utter contempt is to insult, capture, and afflict Christ Jesus, our Mediator and Intercessor, who bore our sins. For He says, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto them, ye have done it to me.' "Oh," she implored her son, "how can you cause me this sorrow? Has every bit of faithfulness and faith left you? If that is the kind of obedience you learned in Spain, then may God have mercy on the honest Germans, who have been thus forsaken by one of their native countrymen. I cannot write all that ought to be written. Let me ask yet one thing of you, desist from your wicked purpose, and send me a favorable answer. Give Corvinus and Walter their liberty, and give them in my care.... If you do not want them here, and if you are determined to cast Christ out of your land, do it not with such tyranny, but let them depart with honor and grace."

At the same time Elisabeth wrote to Eric's councillors. She sent them a copy of the letter to her son, and admonished them to do all they could to the end that the captives be released. "If there is a single drop of blood in you that loves Jesus Christ, the crucified and only Savior of the world, we hereby beseech you as Christians, be not so dumb, think of eternity, let this terrible raging and mad endeavor touch your hearts, and help with the

other cities and councillors to take the part of the innocent prisoners, and ask our son to release them."

The same day she sent the following letter of comfort to the prisoners: "Be of good comfort, patient, steadfast, in your suffering, after the example of the crucified Savior, let nothing terrify nor mislead you, but remain the called and chosen of Christ, and thank the Lord Christ that you are not suffering as thieves, murderers, evildoers, but that you are counted worthy to suffer such persecution for the glory of Christ, for you will receive the glorious, imperishable crown of eternal salvation. Oh, that this should come upon you from him who is our own flesh and blood, and has forgotten his honor and good name! But may you not waver; be strong, and fight the good fight of confessing the pure faith and the name of our only Savior Jesus Christ. Pray diligently and commit the matter to the Almighty, He will help you wonderfully, as he helped Peter."

The letter was never delivered to Corvinus. Eric ordered it to be taken from the messenger. He did not even consider it worthy of a word of reply to his mother. He demanded of Corvinus to surrender the paper he had written against the Interim, which had been submitted to a synod and was signed by over one hundred and forty clergymen, as we have heard. Corvinus reported Eric's demand to the duchess, but she refused to give up the paper, and in her reply added a few words of comfort. She also wrote the following words on a separate slip: "Dear Corvinus, I sympathize with you. I should like to have written this entire letter with my own hand, but I could not, being bed-ridden and ill, yet I have dictated it to the writer, and in so doing have shed bitter tears, which, no doubt, go through the clouds and to your God and mine, who is our strength and power at the right hand of God."

The petitions in Corvinus' behalf, which arrived in large numbers from many cities, were gruffly rejected by Eric. He strictly forbade his councillors to interfere in any way. Elisabeth became seriously ill from grief. "Our son," she wrote to a friend, "rages worse than any papist ever did against the holy church of Christ, he deposes preachers and reestablishes the old idolatry."

However, Eric's endeavors did not have the desired effect. In the larger cities of his realm the Interim was simply ignored. To get the necessary funds, he had to allow Goettingen and Hannover free exercise of religion. In the convents the mass had again become quite general, but there were not enough priests to take the place of the Lutheran preachers who had been driven away, and the consequence was that many congregations, especially in the country, could get no priests and did not turn again to catholicism. In the year 1557 Eric went to Spain and discontinued every communication with his mother and with his wife, Sidonia.

Corvinus was left behind, a prisoner. The captives at first were roughly handled. Their dungeon was so damp that their clothes

rotted on their bodies. They were not permitted to communicate in any way with the outside world. Later, it seems, they were treated less severely. But the captivity, which had now lasted several years, had undermined Corvinus' health. The physicians declared he would soon die if he were not set free. Induced by the urgent plea of the duchess, the councillors took courage and approached the duke, telling him of Corvinus' illness and entreating him to give the prisoner his liberty, lest to Eric's shame he die in the dungeon. The representatives of the nobility, at a meeting in 1551, had also expressed the desire that Corvinus and Walter Hocker be released from the long incarceration. Many of the nobility offered to give bond for Corvinus. But all was in vain. All Eric promised was to speak to the emperor for him.

At last, late in the fall of 1552, after three years of imprisonment, the hour of deliverance had come. Unexpectedly Eric returned into his own country from Spain. He came to Calenberg, and after a conversation with the prisoners promised them to give them their liberty if they would solemnly promise to appear before him in case he should call for them. A number of prominent and rich men were required as guarantors that Corvinus and Walter would do nothing to take revenge for the injustice they had suffered, and so they were set at liberty. Corvinus at once notified Elisabeth, and to the glad news he added the request: "We beg most humbly that your royal grace would meet the duke motherly and Christian-like and treat with leniency anything that might tend to arouse bitterness, in order that the young heart may through our moderation be more and more restored." Surely there was not the least grudge in the heart of that great man.

Eric remained a stranger to Protestantism to the end of his life, but his fight against the Gospel was lost. He declared before a convention of the nobility at Hannover that he had ordered the persecution of Lutheranism to the imperial command, but that henceforth there should be no interference with the preaching of the Lutheran confession in his principality. Soon after that, a decree went out from him forbidding to oppress or even annoy in any manner the adherents of the Lutheran faith. The deposed preachers returned, Lutheran songs were again heard everywhere, and the Lutheran order of service was reinstated. Eric gave the direction of these church matters in charge of his mother, with whom he was now fully reconciled. The Gospel had won the victory.

Corvinus did not live to see the day. When the meeting at Hannover marked the reconciliation, he had been two weeks in his grave. The long captivity had totally undermined his health. He had come to Hannover a sick man. He devoted his last feeble strength to the writing of a prayer-book. On Wednesday after Easter, the 5th of April, he bade this world farewell.

When the bells tolled at his funeral, Eric asked one of his servants what all that tolling meant. The answer was, "They are burying Corvinus." "Then," an old record says, "his Princely Grace began to weep, and retired to his room, where he remained over an hour." We can well imagine that bitter remorse filled his heart. During the following years he wandered restlessly about, until, in 1584, he died in Pavia, unwept, a stranger in a strange land.



9. Giovanni Mollio, An Italian Hero of the Reformation.

In the beautiful Toscana region, near Siena, Italy, Giovanni Mollio was born, towards the end of the last century before the Reformation. His parents were poor, but he was endowed with great intellectual gifts, and very early showed a thirst after knowledge. The Franciscan Order at that time was reputed to give a thorough scientific training, and so Giovanni joined this order. He was prompted to take this step also by the care for his soul, thinking he could find peace for his troubled conscience in the solitude of cloister walls.

About this time the sweet notes of the new-awakened Gospel-song were wafted from Germany over into sunny Italy and thrilled many a heart with joy. Mollio was one of those who were mightily stirred by the new tidings they heard. He, like many others, had experienced that neither the rough monkish garb nor the strict observance of the monastic rule could give rest to the soul. Neither did he find peace in his scientific studies. At Milan he joined the circles that sought edification in God's Word and were ministered unto by evangelical preachers. Here his faith was mightily increased and he gained those convictions for which he stood to the end of his days.

Near the close of the year 1532, Giovanni was transferred to Bologna, where Cardinal Campeggio resided, who had advised Charles V to "exterminate the poisonous weed of the evangelical church with fire and sword." But even in this stronghold of popish darkness there were in these days of the Reformation zealous and brave friends of the truth, even among the professors of the institution at which Giovanni was teaching. Giovanni associated with those men and was so led deeper into the truth of the Gospel. They realized the danger in which they were, as we see from a circular letter that was written at Bologna and sent to the friends of the Reformation in Italy, and which contains the sentence: "We also know that, far from feeling bitter against the hateful charges of heresy, you would rather consider yourselves fortunate and would rejoice, if you were the first to suffer censure, shame, imprisonment, fire, sword, for Christ's name."

In Bologna Mollio lectured to appreciative audiences on the Epistles of St. Paul. Since, however, the doctrine of justification taught by St. Paul is at variance with the catholic doctrine of meritorious works, indulgences, purgatory, etc., there was soon strong opposition against Giovanni's lectures, and a quarrel arose

between the factions. Cornelio, professor of mathematics, undertook to engage in a public dispute with Mollio on the doctrine of justification, but was soon put to confusion. He then accused Mollio to the popish court of promulgating heresy. It is very remarkable that even among the cardinals at the pope's court the Lutheran doctrine had gained some recognition. Among those high dignitaries Giovanni found some supporters and protectors, the cardinals Contarini, Sadolet, Pole, and Fregoso. Mollio, who had personally appeared at Rome and frankly stated his position, was permitted to return to Bologna after the Roman tribunal had rendered the opinion that his doctrine was Scriptural, but that, since it could not be proclaimed without injury to the pope, he should desist from lecturing on the Epistles of St. Paul, and should discourse on the philosophy of Aristotle instead. Mollio, however, continued to teach the doctrine of a sinner's justification by faith. Consequently Campeggio transferred him to the convent of San Lorenzo at Naples, in the year 1538.

In Naples our faithful confessor found a circle of highly educated and refined men and women who discussed the doctrines of Scripture among themselves and soon became enthusiastic adherents to the truth. Their leader was the Spaniard Juan Valdez, who now introduced Mollio into their society. In Naples Mollio again lectured on the Epistles of St. Paul, and was gladly heard by large assemblies. The people panted after the truth of the Word of God, the water of life. When his friend and co-worker Bernardino Ochino would preach in the cathedral, the large church could not hold the throng that came to hear. An eye-witness of this movement exclaimed, "Merciful God, what a rich outpouring of God's Spirit!"

But, alas, these springtime blossoms of the Reformation in Italy were withered by a burning blast that followed. — the *Inquisition*: Indignation waxed stronger and stronger at the continued reports that the heretical doctrine was publicly preached in Naples. The discussions led by Valdez, the sermons of Ochino, and Mollio's lectures, were listened to by spies, and every deviation from the Roman doctrine was carefully noted and reported to Rome. The condition of the Lutherans in Italy grew more hopeless from day to day. Valdez died, Ochino left Naples with a few friends and went to Switzerland, only Giovanni Mollio stayed at Naples to strengthen the little congregation which had been flourishing so happily. Now the enemies of the Reformation succeeded in convincing the pope that the spreading of the Lutheran heresy could be curbed only by the severest measures. The pope resolved to introduce the Inquisition (1542), a special court for the suppression of the evangelical doctrine.

Mollio was compelled to leave Naples. For ten years he was watched, persecuted, imprisoned, by the Inquisition and its chief supporters, the Jesuits. In 1553 he was captured and taken to

Rome. On September 5th of the same year he was placed solemnly on trial. With a burning torch in his hand he appeared before the Inquisitors and confirmed with unshaken courage the doctrine of justification alone by faith in Christ, the Mediator. He then scored with flaming words the ungodliness and hypocrisy of his judges. "The pope," he said, "is in no wise the successor of Christ or Peter, nor is he the head of the church, but he is the true Antichrist, who with impudence assumed tyrannical power over the church. Your church is not God's, but the real Babel. You despise and reject with atrocious wickedness the Lord Christ and



Ignace de Loyola. Founder of the Jesuit Order.

His Word. You do not really believe that there is a God in heaven. You persecute and kill God's faithful servants. You deprive the poor consciences of their freedom, and oppress them. I therefore appeal my case from this miserable court to the judgment throne of Christ at the last day. There you will be made to give strict account of all your deeds and neglects, and unless you repent you will have to burn forever in the fire of hell. As a token of this warning take back the burning torch which you put in my hand."

With these words he cast the burning torch before their feet. The cardinals and bishops gnashed their teeth with fury and com-

manded that the man be removed from their sight. Then sentence was passed upon Mollio and his fellow-sufferer, Tisserano, that they should be hanged and their bodies burned. When Mollio heard the sentence, he looked toward heaven and said, "O Jesus Christ, my Savior, my highest Lord and my shepherd, there is nothing on earth that could please me more than to shed my blood for Thy name's sake!"

At the place of execution Mollio once more thanked his Redeemer that in unspeakable grace He had granted him the light of His Word and had chosen him for a witness of the Gospel. Both faithful witnesses were then hanged, and their bodies were burned to ashes.



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